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*BURNSIANA*



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# BURNSIANA:

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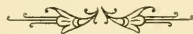
## ROBERT BURNS

COMPILED BY

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THIS THIRD VOLUME OF "BURNSIANA"

*Is Dedicated to*

PROFESSOR JOHN STUART BLACKIE,

OF WHOSE ENTHUSIASM FOR BURNS AND ALL THINGS SCOTTISH

IT IS UNNECESSARY TO SPEAK.





NOTE TO VOLUMES III. AND IV.

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THE success that attended the publication of Volumes I. and II. of this work, and the large amount of material on the subject of Burns which has accumulated on my hands of late, have induced me to issue Volumes III. and IV. simultaneously. Thanks are again sincerely tendered to Subscribers, Contributors, and well-wishers.

JOHN D. ROSS.

126 PALMETTO STREET,  
BROOKLYN, N.Y., U.S.A.



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# BURNSIANA.

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## I.—MR. LEWIS M'IVER ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Edinburgh Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.*

REPRINTED FROM *THE SCOTSMAN*.

THERE is no room for affectation in the timidity with which I approach the duty imposed on me to-night by your flattering but mistaken confidence. It is in sincere fright, born of conscious incompetence, that I rise in response to the chair, and I can only plead in extenuation of my shortcomings that when this honour was first proposed to me I earnestly urged the incompetence as an excuse from undertaking a task to which I am in no sense equal. It was not so much the intrinsic greatness of the subject—great as it is—that made me pause. It was not so much that in speaking of Burns to the members of the Burns Club I should be in the position of an amateur addressing professionals on their own speciality. It was not even my own lack of critical capacity. I knew my audience would supply that abundantly and to spare. None of these weighty considerations daunted me so much as the immanent recollection of a certain famous roll inscribed on the records of this Club—the names of those who aforetime have essayed at this board to strike a note worthy of this theme; essayed in divers tones and with various measures of fulfilment fitly to glorify a memory to maintain and honour which this Club exists. Some of them long since “set out to sea,” many of them, we are glad to remember, yet living amongst us, but all of an eminence and an eloquence to which I have no claim—all fortified by knowledge of their subject, furnished with critical faculty wherewith to treat it, brimful of quotation for its

ornament, and mirth for its enlivenment. Gentlemen, when I thought of the long and distinguished list of these my predecessors, when I reflected what were their qualifications and wondered where were mine, I shrank from the audacity of attempting to imitate them, and half resolved that, instead, I would only attempt to chronicle them. For I realised that with last year this Club had completed the first quarter century of its fully recorded work—a quarter of a century of gatherings such as this—a quarter of a century of worthy, witty, brilliant orations such as this is not—and then the thought occurred to me that I might, perhaps, find a safe way out of an *impasse*, if, instead of a twenty-sixth speech unworthy to be included in your *Liber Aureus*, I offered you an Index or a Table of Contents for that unique volume, and in thus helping to complete it, I might lay a humble claim to collaboration, much in the same way as that actor who claimed to have played in “Hamlet” with Kean, when, as a matter of fact, he had only been told off to produce the crowing of the cock in the ghost scene. Various reasons, including your stock of patience, forbid my realising this scheme to-night, but it would be no inglorious task to remind you of the names and recall the words of those who have thus delighted to honour Burns and have delighted others in the doing. It would be as though a simple citizen, standing reverently before that enduring shrine which the poet's fellow-countrymen have erected to him in their hearts, and,

having no flowers of his own to offer, took upon him the duty of collecting and arranging the splendid wreaths and immortelles already laid there in profusion by famous Scotsmen—and added thereto the roll of their names, representing, as it does, much of the best in brains and breed, or both, that the land o' Burns has produced since his own time. To read that list, gentlemen, is like glancing over the social history of Scotland during the last twenty-five years. It gives you milestones in the record of our professions, our art, our literature, our statecraft; eminent doctors, learned judges and lawyers; painters, poets, and journalists; a roll that stretches from James Bannatyne to Cameron Lees—in which jurisprudence is represented by names such as Inglis and Moncrief, Young, and Shand—journalism by Stoddart and Charles Cooper—and which reverences literature by beginning with Professor Masson and ending with Andrew Lang. Such a list needs to Edinburgh men and Scottish men no embellishment of mine. With such an index to its first volume it is not necessary to remind the members of this Club of the cloud of testimony from outside which supports them in their self-appointed task of keeping fresh and green "the immortal memory," nor to recall that unparalleled outburst of a nation's enthusiasm—which is one of the most vivid recollections of my own boyhood—on this day thirty-four years ago, when Scotland, from John o' Groat's to Wigtown Bay, from Aberdeen to Ardnamurchan, blazed into hero-worship—when the English-speaking world as well as the Scottish-speaking world stood up to do honour to that memory; that night when not only every town and hamlet in our country held high revel, but when every city in India, every sheep station in Australia, every knot of log cabins in Canada saw drawn together groups of Scotsmen in whose hearts a national pride was fired anew by the name of him whose magic had added lustre to their common country, and infused a deathless music into their common tongue. Needless, too, to recall the tributes of Ardmillan, and Monckton Milnes, and Isa Craig, of Lockhart and Carlyle, of Emerson and Lowell, of Goethe and Heine, or the other famous names in

German and French literature who have justified to all time the cult of this Club. But with a chorus of such voices, who shall name our Poet unwept, unhonoured, or unsung, *caret quia vate sacro*? I think, although I have abandoned the project, I may have suggested to you that duly to praise his prophets—fitly to sing those who sang the singer—is a worthy task for worthier yet to do; and that to-night, when we rise to drink the immortal memory of Burns, it may be fitting to feel that we also stand uncovered in the presence of those who have decorated that memory—the illustrious living, the glorious dead—those who, having made their mark on the rock of life, paused, ere going, to lay of their best on his tomb, and then sped on to join him in the beyond; and those who, still enriching the world by their presence and their work, have rejoiced to add fragrance to his memory by their word. Far be it from me to suggest that there is not much yet to say of our many-sided poet—and much well worth the saying—only I am not competent to say it. The subject is a well-nigh inexhaustible mine. But the mine is to the miners, and criticism to the critics. To measure his achievements relatively to others, to weigh his effect on letters, to winnow, select, and appraise the work he produced, demands the scientific standard, the trained balance, the fine-meshed sieve which belongs to an honoured department of literature. To admire, to deplore, to love is not enough. But the defect of this equipment whereby the learned perpend and pronounce, does not prevent us, others—the rest of the world—from *feeling* Burns—feeling, enjoying, and loving his work, as does our whole nation; while

"Sister lands have learned to love the tongue  
In which such songs are sung."

There is no side of our common humanity to which he does not irresistibly appeal, and there is no thought of racial exclusiveness or class distinction in the movement of that appeal. He never fails to find that "touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin," and not one song alone, but the better part of all his work helps to awaken and sustain in our hearts the inspiring, ennobling creed of the individual dignity and the universal



brotherhood of man ; not only "a man's a man for a' that," but

"Man to man the world o'er  
Shall brothers be for a' that."

That is his larger, his cosmopolitan aspect. But his "brither Scots" may be forgiven if, looking nearer home, they incline more fondly to dwell on another, perhaps narrower, but certainly more concentrated and potent effect of his genius. That he absolutely revived a dead, or dormant, national literature ; that his fiery impetus swept away the always exotic and sometimes over-precious stuff which at that time masqueraded as Scottish literature—because, forsooth, it was printed in Edinburgh—that his choice of domestic subjects inspired a new school ; that his example, and what he called his "tide of Scottish prejudice," cleared the ground for *Waverley*, and Hogg, and Tannahill, was a great achievement. That in "the fire-eyed fury" of "Scots Wha Hae" he endowed his country with the "greatest war ode" of all time ; that he gave us the most perfect hymn of brotherhood in "Auld Lang Syne," and in the "Banks and Braes" an ideal love song, unsurpassed from Anacreon to Beranger, is a unique record. But with simple lovers of the Bard among his countrymen his grandest claim rests on that enduring sense of common kinship which he awoke among us, and which the very mention of his name suffices to rouse into flame. It matters little what others may call it—particularism, clannishness, separatism. We Scotsmen call it patriotism—and patriotism it is, in the best and noblest sense of the word—a patriotism which makes for peace and love, and not for jealousy and aggression—a love of country which does not involve hatred of other countries, and includes not only pride in our country's history and tradition, but a delight in all that belongs to her—her people and her language, her hills and dales, her woods and streams, her flowers and birds, but, above all, the feeling, all the world over, of Scottishmen to Scottishmen. This we owe largely to Burns—to the stirring into life and speech our national thoughts, and not alone to the music to which he set our joys and sorrows, our love and humour, but to the unsealing of a whole peoples' life, and the find-

ing for them utterance for the feelings, the yearnings, the frozen thoughts that till then had been mute. He forced a people into song. His music compelled a national hearing, and awoke national echoes that never more are wholly silent. His laughter, his fears, his passion, his tenderness, his ire, his gloom—

"So clear, so deep, the divine drear accents flow,  
No soul that listens may choose but thrill to know,  
Pierc'd and wrung by the passionate music's throe."

Till, as his greatest critic has said—"His songs are already part of the mother tongue, not of Scotland only, but of Britain, and of millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many coloured joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe is that name and voice which Burns has given them." To this, more than to anything, is it due that Burns's personality is to-day as living a possession as though he were yet amongst us, and that the Man is enshrined in our hearts as surely as the Poet is secure in the Temple of Fame. It is nigh a hundred years since he left us, and yet so green, so fresh, so intimate is his memory to peer and peasant that Robbie is spoken of as familiarly and as fondly as though we had known him in life and mourned at his death. His life, its troubles, his character, his qualities, and his failings are better known, are still discussed with keener interest than those of our relations or neighbours who died yesterday. Greatly as we delight and glory in his work, our strongest feelings go out to the Man. Whatever the judgment of the cognoscenti on his literary place and rank, each of us will champion his own estimate of the Man. While others discuss the sincerity of his treatment or his graphic gift, the "vigour of his intellectual perception," or the intensity of his feeling, the width of his range, or the epigrammatic terseness of his phrase, we are thinking of Rob Mossgiel, not alone the ploughman, poet, patriot, or democrat, but that which included and summed them all—the "fully unfolded man"—the "gentleman who drew his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." As to his place in our hearts, at all events, there is no controversy. But this

very affection for Burns on the part of his countrymen and the interest it has created in everything connected with him have not always resulted in justice to his reputation; for, coupled with the phenomenal facts of his meteoric career and the tragedy of his too brief life, they have evoked a persistence and minuteness of inquiry into everything in or bearing on his life such as few of us would like to be submitted to. A dozen biographies per decade his memory might withstand; but the inventive fussing of some scores of collectors of personalia and anecdotes to which his record has been subjected has been more than any name could survive untarnished. Talk about the "fierce light which beats upon a throne!" What is that to the flashing electric searchlights of modern scientific biography, supplemented by the farthing dips of those who pry and burrow into the nooks and crannies of dead men's lives? In the case of Burns one result of the imaginative, and not always benevolent, industry of the "reminiscence man" is that not only do we know all he ever did, or said, or wrote, but we can know, if we like to believe, a great deal that he never did, nor said, nor wrote—from that apocryphal and astounding story of his fishing in fancy costume girt with a huge claymore to the precious manuscripts which have recently given a temporary tenant to Calton Jail. At one time Burns' life and character were as a shuttlecock between honest, but often injudicious and indiscriminate, worship on the one side, and equally honest, no doubt, but too often narrow and dogmatic censoriousness, on the other. And although time with its softening influence and its juster perspective has brought a calmer judgment and a better sense of proportion, the old unworthy controversy still survives, and scandals, wholly discredited and discarded by competent biographers, are from time to time renewed with much parade of judicial impartiality, and, let us hope, in the belief that some useful purpose is served by thus disinterring and mutilating the reputations of men and women long since gone to their rest. We might afford to disregard this ghoulish work were it not that sometimes the mud sticks and fair-minded men's impressions are unconsciously

coloured thereby, so that many of the Bard's sincere admirers are still inclined sensitively to deprecate close inquiry into his history. They touched it very lightly, and generally seem glad to get away from that part of their subject. Well, gentlemen, I for one repudiate that apologetic attitude. I hold that it has been vastly overdone. For, after all, what does it all come to? What are the charges? I do not ask you to ignore or to condemn anything, but what are the facts? First, that an eminently joyous, genial man, not only socially gregarious but gifted, perhaps unhappily for himself, with a subtle and fascinating attractiveness for his fellows, and submitted to a wholly exceptional amount of temptation, was occasionally betrayed into social excesses by no means exceptional even for ordinary men in those days; while, on the other hand, we know that he recognized the evil there was in this, and strove manfully against it.

"What's done we partly may compute,  
But kenna what's resistit."

To measure this matter with even approximate fairness, you must put yourself in his place and in his time—a place absolutely unique in the degree and persistence of its temptation, and a time when there was probably not a conscious teetotaller in Scotland; when, at all events, there was a supposed dignity in drunkenness. It is not necessary to accept the cynicism that "all virtue is the absence of temptation" in order to defend the Bard on this point. Rather, I find ground for admiration in the determined, and often for prolonged periods successful, resistance which he offered to the insidious and many-headed temptation by which he was surrounded. Interpreting his history faithfully, we might claim that he led a sort of temperance movement in his own mind; that, like the modern movement, it had periods of success interrupted by lapses and backslidings; and that, despite the better social attitude and the better example of to-day, his pledges broken and renewed find their counterparts in well-nigh every Good Templar lodge and Rechabite tent in modern Scotland. The second and more serious charge upon which he has been arraigned is of his relations with the other sex. Gentlemen, here again, I am



not going to ask you to ignore or condone anything. And in this relation it would be indecorous for me to ask you to put yourselves in his place. I will not even invite you, as I well might, to consider the morals of the times or the customs of the class in the country and in the period in which he lived. But I may ask you to realise that the period of his life from which this act of indictment is drawn is limited to some five or six years, and in the adolescence of a life which was never fully grown up. Till twenty-three we know he was of virginal innocence. At twenty-nine he was finally and formally married to the wife whose kind and loving husband he was till his death. Of a single deplorable aberration after his marriage I will say nothing; for if his noble wife saw fit to draw a sponge over it, we are hardly entitled to discuss it. During the period that immediately preceded his marriage there had been episodes—at least one authenticated episode—which I do not seek to minimise, extenuate, or defend; but if he is to be judged, I do claim, before he is condemned, that he be judged as a whole. Here we have a man—a peerless man—a warm-hearted, impulsive, impassioned man of a grateful, loving, impressionable and responsive nature, starting from the humblest root, absolutely untutored in the world's ways, plunged into abnormal surroundings, sore-tried in the fire of adversity, which, if it purifies the substance, nearly always sears and scars the surface, and we know of this man that he was a good and devoted friend, a good and dutiful son, a good and generous brother, a good and attentive husband, a good and affectionate father. Of how many can we say as much? Who of us can afford to throw a stone at such a character? I ask who are we to judge of a nature whose complex impulses are as far removed from our ken as the stars, set in circumstances of which we know but the outside, storm-driven, and tempted by agencies impossible of evidence? When one thinks of the puny limits of our capacity to measure human forces and human motives even in matters of to-day of the infinite fallibility of our judgment even when apparently adequate evidence is before it, one is tempted to turn from hasty human verdicts to that trustful

tribute to Divine justice and forgiveness which came from a soul kindred to Burns in song and in affliction—*tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*—fully to understand everything would be fully to forgive everything. But if we are to deal out human judgments in the matter of moths and beams, let us take thought that “mercy tempers justice”:—

“Then gently scan your brither man,  
Still gentler sister woman;  
Though they may gang a-kennin wrang,  
To step aside is human.  
One point must still be greatly dark,  
The moving *why* they do it;  
And just as lamely can ye mark  
How far perhaps they rue it.”

So the poet pleaded on behalf of every ordinary man and woman. With how much greater force may we urge it in defence of a man circumstanced as Burns was, and of a character and temperament such as he possessed—the strongest points in which were inevitably correlated to complimentary weaknesses. I am not claiming, as Sir Archibald Alison once said, an “exemption from moral responsibility for the sons of genius.” But I am asking you to remember that every nature has the defects of its qualities, and the greater the nature the more marked are the extremes. And looking back at that pathetic figure—its beauties and its blemishes alike heroic—in its lonely, unequal, and yet victorious combat with Titanic forces, grasping the difficulties, the struggles that beset him, the temptations that encircled and bound him like a new Prometheus, realising the whole tragedy of that too short life, I am grateful to remember the beautiful words of our greatest poetess, where she mourns the cost to his own humanity and to his own natural place with his fellows, at which a man takes life-service with the muses. Many of you will recall that wonderful figure of the great god Pan:—

“Down in the reeds by the river  
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,  
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat;”

and, setting out to make a poet out of a man,

“He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,  
From the deep cool bed of the river.

“And hack’d and hewed as a great god can . . .  
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed  
To prove it fresh from the river.

"He cut it short, did the great god Pan,  
 (How tall it stood in the river?)  
 Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,  
 Steadily from the outside ring,  
 And notched the poor dry empty thing  
 In holes as he sat by the river."

He produced music in good truth "when he  
 blew in power by the river."

"Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!  
 Piercing sweet by the river!  
 Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!  
 The sun on the hill forgot to die,  
 And the lilies revived and the dragon fly  
 Came back to dream on the river."

"Yet"—and here is the tragedy of it!"

"Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,  
 To laugh as he sits by the river,  
 Making a poet out of a man.  
 The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—  
 For the reed which grows never more again  
 As a reed with the reeds in the river."

The poet is not only by nature something  
 apart. He is almost invariably by circum-  
 stances set apart from the lives of other men.  
 He is, as Mrs. Browning sings, torn up by  
 the roots and set to grow alone, taking sus-  
 tenance from himself and from that mysterious  
 ether whence comes his inspiration. Surely,  
 surely, if we are going to judge his life at all,  
 we should, at all events, judge it gently. Mr.  
 Chairman, when I began, I warned this  
 goodly company of what they were in for;  
 but, until I was fairly embarked, I had no  
 notion how portentously dull I could be.  
 And herein is a double crime; for gloom is  
 most inopportune at a convivial gathering,  
 and dulness—always inexcusable—is an out-  
 rage in connection with a prince of good-  
 fellows, the father of so much mirth in the  
 past, in the present, and in the ages yet to  
 come. That is the side of the

"Sad, glad poet  
 Whose soul was a white dove lost in the whirling  
 snow,"

which is meetest for to-night; and, after all,  
 to invert the words of Marc Antony, I come  
 to praise, not to bury, Burns. On the occa-  
 sion of a genuine "nicht wi' Burns" there is  
 no need of an invocation to Euphrosyne.  
 And one has but to pull out the mirthful stop  
 in that magnificent instrument in order to  
 flood this room with sunshine. That done,  
 the scalpel of criticism is out of place. None

of us want to dissect a nightingale. For  
 then enter

Sport that wrinkled care derides,  
 And laughter holding both his sides.

Then *exeunt*, abashed, "loathed melancholy"  
 and all her crew! Himself by nature the  
 gladdest and mirthfullest of souls; in his  
 youth, despite poverty and hardship, "the  
 gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating  
 being to be found in the world"—and, later,  
 even when troubles and difficulties and dis-  
 appointments were closing in on him like a  
 cloud, when physical ailments were crippling  
 him, his native buoyancy was wont to reassert  
 itself, and at intervals to flash out in mad  
 gaiety with an invincible humour almost  
 equal to that of him who "lived a life of  
 sturt and strife," and "died by treachery."

"Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,  
 Sae dauntonly gaed he:  
 He played a spring and danced it round  
 Below the gallows tree."

And the gladness of Burns lives for ever  
 in his songs; and even as they are his most  
 enduring monument, so his mirth and joyous-  
 ness, which they embalm, are our indestruc-  
 tible possession. He has been above all  
 things a benefactor of humanity, and especi-  
 ally of his own countrymen as a songster, and  
 a glad songster:—

"God sent His singers upon earth  
 With songs of sadness and of mirth,  
 That they might touch the hearts of men,  
 And bring them back to heaven again."

If with firm and confident finger he struck  
 many noble and lofty chords in the national  
 harp that no musician before or since has  
 found, and which still vibrate, and will con-  
 tinue to vibrate while the heart of Scotland  
 beats, he has also given echoing expression  
 to the gayest and gladdest impulses of our  
 nature. He discovered a rich mine of joyous-  
 ness under the rough rock surface of our  
 national character. He brought its gems to  
 light from the depths. He cut and polished  
 them, and he left them to us an imperishable  
 inheritance, a perennial source of brightness  
 and good-fellowship; and we can best per-  
 petuate our gratitude and his glorious name  
 by keeping foremost that brightest aspect of  
 his achievement, and by being glad to think

of him as he would have chosen we should. What though—

“ His regal vestments soil’d,  
His crown of half its jewels spoil’d,  
He is a king for all.”

In moments such as this, we honour him most, not by analysing his work, not by deploring what he did not do in poetry or what

he did do in life, but by gratefully recognising what he has done for us—what wealth he left us, what gladness he gave us, by hymning his praise as one who not only was every inch a man—and Scottish at that—who not only was the truest poet and the world’s most peerless song-maker—but was also the father of our merriest moments.

## BURNS IN 1893.

EDITORIAL IN *SCOTSMAN*, January 26th, 1893.

SCOTSMEN get credit, but only in the eyes of prejudiced and superficial people, for being the most prosaic and sober-witted of men. Yet they are the only race that keep a day sacred to the Muse of Song. Yesterday, wherever, at the utmost ends of the earth, two or three of them were gathered together, they toasted the “immortal memory” of Burns, and hanned the fame of their bard with grateful thoughts and eloquent words, with lyric verse and music. This is not a people whose heart has hardened, and whose ideas have become conventionalised. In honouring Burns, Scotland honours its own better part, and it will be time to deplore the decay of the national spirit and character when his countrymen begin to grow ashamed of, or indifferent to, the national poet. Assuredly that day is still far off. If one may judge by the gatherings at Burns festivals, and the enthusiasm displayed there, by the frequency with which the name and the fame, the life and the words, of the poet find mention in the conversation and the literature of the day, the Ayrshire Ploughman is a growing, and not a waning, power in his own land and outside its bounds. Yet it wants little more than three years till the centenary of his death, poor, neglected, and heart-broken, at an age when, with most men, the best work of their lives is still before them. It is the last and highest proof of the poet’s greatness that his fragmentary song should thus abide the test of time. What has preserved its dew and freshness through all the changes and distractions of a busy century is safe to last as long as the race. But, as Mr. Lewis M’Iver pointed out in his eloquent ad-

dress at the Burns Anniversary dinner in the Waterloo Rooms, Burns is not the peculiar possession of Scotsmen. They stand nearest to him; he speaks a language which they only can fully understand in its more subtle and poignant meanings, and his words go more directly to their hearts. But his message was not for a nation, but for the round world. A patriot to the core, his sympathies went out to all human kind, and he struck notes which find responsive chords in the heart of every man who feels and thinks. Thus, as Mr. M’Iver reminds us, it is scarcely less inspiring to look at the circle of Burns’ admirers, living and dead, than at the poet himself. The votaries have been worthy of the shrine. They embrace men of all ranks and professions, of many nations, and of the most diverse types and opinions. Appreciation and love of Burns may very well stand as the test of a man’s liberality of spirit and capacity for extending his sympathies beyond the narrow circle of self. The taste that is too fine to be captivated by his fancy we suspect to be superfine; the heart that is not touched to laughter or tears by his humour and his pathos we judge to be too coarse or case-hardened; it is not made of “penetrable stuff.”

As sure as a Burns anniversary comes round, the faults of his brief career are dragged again to the light and subjected to microscopic examination and not too charitable comment. We are asked to praise him less as Poet—or to refrain from praise and take to denunciation—because he was not perfect as a Man. Against this tone Mr. M’Iver raises a noble and eloquent protest.



Surely now that nearly a hundred years have passed since the chapter of his errors was completed, we might be content to close the book. His faults, such as they were, were heavily punished and bitterly repented of in his lifetime. But the sect of the Pharisees promises to be as immortal as the memory of Burns. The poet was not cold in his grave when the cry began to go up that his sins must be kept in perpetual remembrance. His friend, William Nicol, of the High School, speaks indignantly of it. It gave him great pain, he wrote, to see the encomiums of the poet "mixed with reproaches of the most indelicate and cruel nature; but stupidity and idiocy rejoice when a great and immortal genius falls." The chorus has continued down to our own day. Cant and uncharitableness chiefly inspire it, since dulness itself can no longer deny the supreme merit of the poet. But the priceless boon of the living song is ignored, and every forgotten slip made by the dead singer is noted and proclaimed on the housetops. It is not desirable that Burns' life and character should be presented as other than what they were. But it is right that his work and himself should be appraised and judged as a whole. He comes to us, after every item has been set against his name that envy or malice can suggest, with an enormous balance at his credit. He has claims upon the gratitude of his fellow-men and his fellow-countrymen that no words can express or love repay. He has done more for liberty than whole libraries of statute books; more for literature than all the tomes of the Encyclopædists. The lines written by the "good gray poet" of New England, who died last year, are scarcely overstrained:—

"Give fettered pomp to teeth of Time,  
So 'Bonnie Doon' but tarry;  
Blot out the Epic's stately rhyme,  
But spare his 'Highland Mary,'"

As for morals, since morality is in question, it may be said of Burns that he has exerted a more healthy and purifying influence upon the general body of human thought and speech than schools of philosophy and seminaries of priests. In the mere cleansing and reviving of our ballad literature, how much do not Scotland and the world that has an ear

for music and romance owe him. At his magic touch the familiar songs of the people sprang up again in new sweetness—"fairer and not less old." And if love and mirth have a rightful place in a world cold and sad enough without them, who has sung and laughed with truer note and fuller heart?

On the whole may it not be said that no Scotsman and few among the sons of men have left so rich and gracious a heritage behind them? Let the formalist keep the record of the stumblings of the poet on the arduous and thorny path which he had to tread; large-hearted and large-minded men will mark where the path led, and note that even when prone in the mire his eye was still fixed on the star. The qualities that give Burns his peculiar place among the singers of all time are his truth and his fearlessness. He saw and sang the beauty of things held vulgar and below the noble office of poetry by the modish bards of his day. He was one of the first, in an artificial age, to proclaim the dignity of toil and the nobility of simple manly worth. With "A Man's a Man for a' that" engraved on the memory of the world, it has been easier to remember, harder to forget, that there is nothing low in lowly estate. That these eighteenth century artificialities influenced his own surface thought and speech is evident enough in his correspondence, and even in his English verse. But when he turned to his native Doric he became himself again, as at the magic touch of his mother earth; and his words, tender and melancholy, or playful and scathing, became the very accents of human nature. Herein we may find another reason for cherishing the memory of Burns. For it is certain that, though the national spirit and character may remain and grow stronger, the mother-tongue which Burns spoke so surpassing well threatens to "wear awa" with the years and their changes. The songs of Burns give it, more than any single thing else, its hope of immortality. But against it is leagued the grinding modern forces—the Code and the Railway perhaps in the front—that make for uniformity, and rub down all that is characteristic and outstanding in national manners and modes of thought and speech. The present generation of educated Scotsmen have lost or

are losing the habit and gift of speaking the "braid Scots" that was the common speech of gentle and simple, although, thanks to Burns above all, they have not lost the relish for and understanding of it. Our children understand it and use it still less. Will there come, along with this process, a gradual failure of appreciation for Burns and his lilt of love, and sorrow, and gladness? This

would be a loss past all reckoning, for which the remote contingency of the coming of a new Burns, writing in the Queen's English approved by the Education Department, would not be recompense. All that can be said of such a dismal future is that no shadow of its coming is to be discovered in the speeches and proceedings of the Burns Festivals.

### III.—COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Chicago (Ills.) Caledonian Society, January 23rd, 1893.*

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—We have met to-night to honour the memory of a great poet—possibly the next to the greatest that has ever written in our language. If I should give him the place which he is entitled to, taking into consideration what he has done for me, I should place him second, one above him and only one—Shakespeare.

We are here to-night, I say, to honour a poet, and it may be well enough to inquire in the first place what a poet is? What is poetry? Every one has some idea of a poet, and this idea is born of his experience, of his impressions, of his education, and depends largely whether his soul has burst into blossom. There have been more nations than poets. Many people imagine that poetry is a kind of art, depending upon certain rules, and that it is only necessary to find out the rules, and if that were all, possibly it would be impossible to find out the rule. These rules have never been found, and yet the great poet follows them unconsciously, and the great poet is as unconscious as nature, and the product of the highest art seems always to be felt instead of thought. The finest definition perhaps that has been given is this: "As nature unconsciously produces that which appears to be the result of conscience, so the greatest artist conscientiously produces that which appears to have been an unconscious result."

Poetry, after all, must rest on the experience of men. It must sit by the fireside of the heart. It must have to do with this world,

with the place in which we live, with the men and women we know, with our loves, with our hopes, with our fears and with our joys. The cloud-compelling Jupiters, the ox-eyed Junos, the feather-heeled Mercuries, and the Minervas that spring fully armed from the thick skull of some imaginary god, are not poetical. We know nothing of them, and by no possibility can we sympathize with them. Such poets, or poems about such people or such phantoms are ingenious, but they are not poetic, and they never will and never can touch the heart.

I was taught that Milton was a wonderful poet, and, above all others, sublime. I have read Milton once. Few people ever read him twice. With splendid words, with magnificent mythological imagery he musters the heavenly militia, puts epaulets on the shoulders of God and describes the devil as an artillery officer of the first rank. Then he describes the battles in which immortals undertake the impossible task of killing each other. And this is called poetry! This is called sublime!

We have been taught, also, that Dante was a wonderful poet. He describes, with infinite minuteness, the pangs and agonies endured by the damned in the torture dungeons of God. But there was one good thing about Dante—and for that one good thing I have forgiven him many faults. He had the religious democracy in his heart and the courage to see a Pope in hell. That is something to be thankful for. So the sonnets

of Petrarch are as unmeaning as the promises of candidates. They are filled, not with genuine passion, not with what another feels, but with what one supposes a lover might feel.

Poetry cannot be written by rule. It is not a trade. It is not a profession. Let the critics lay down the laws of poetry and the true poet will violate them all. By the rule, such as the critics make, you can construct skeletons, but you cannot clothe them with flesh; you cannot put sight in their eyes and passion in their hearts. That is not to be done by rule. It can be done only by following the impulses of the heart, the winged fancies of a wonderful brain; by wandering from ruts and from paths, keeping step with the rhythmic ebb and flow of the throbbing blood.

In the old time, in Scotland, most of the so-called poetry was written by pedagogues and parsons—gentlemen that found out what little they knew about the living world by reading the dead languages, by studying epitaphs in the cemeteries of literature. They knew nothing of any living thing that they themselves thought poetic; the men then living were not worth writing about. The women then alive were not beautiful enough to attract their scholarly attention. They bestowed their praise on the dead, on dust, on skeletons, on phantoms—phantoms, that if they did not live here, were supposed to live somewhere else. They put metaphysics, or endeavoured to—that is to say Calvinism—into their poetry. Imagine a Calvinistic poet. As a matter of fact a Calvinist never was and never will be a poet. That creed takes all the poetry out of this world. If the existence of the Calvinistic, the orthodox Christian creed can be demonstrated, another poet would never live in this world, and have a pretty poor show in the next. In those days they made poetry about geography, poetry about the Scotch kirk and, would you believe it, even about the law. The critics then always looked for mistakes, not beauties, not for perfection of expression and feeling; syntax; grammar. These gentlemen would object to the clouds, because they are not square. And at one time it was thought the scenery, the grand and beautiful

in nature, made the poet. Let me tell you to-night: It is the poet who makes the scenery, the scenery never made a poet and never made an artist in the world. The poet makes the scenery. Holland has produced far more genius than the Alps. There is not much scenery in Holland.

Where nature is prodigal, where the crags kiss the clouds, man is over-awed, over-powered, and becomes small. In England and Scotland the hills are low; nothing in the scenery is calculated to arouse poetic life, and yet those countries have produced the greatest and the most magnificent of all poets of all time. The truth is the poets make the scenery. The place where man has died for man is grander than any snow-crowned summit in the world, the place where man has loved and suffered.

A poem itself is something like scenery, and let me say right here that there is greater scenery in this world than the physical. There are mental seas and continents, and ranges of mountains and constellations of the imagination greater than the eye has ever yet beheld. A poem is something like a mountain stream that ripples into light and then lost in shadow, ripples along with a kind of wild joy under overhanging boughs, and then leaps and hurls its spray on high over some cascade, and then running peacefully along over pebbly bottoms, babbling of joy, murmuring delight and then sweeping along to its old mother, the sea. A mountain stream is a poem in itself.

Thousands and millions of men live poems, but do not write them; but every great poem that was ever written has been lived by the man who wrote it. I say to-night that every good and self-denying man, every man who lives and labours for those he loves, for wife and child, is living a poem. The loving mother rocking the cradle, singing the slumber song, is living a poem, and the man who bares his breast through shot and shell for the right has lived a poem, and the poor woman in the tenement, sewing and looking with her poor blurred eyes upon her work for the love of her child is living a perfect poem, and all the pioneers and all the builders of home, and all the brave men of the world, and all the brave and loving



women have all been poets in action, whether they have ever written one word or not.

But to-night we are going to talk about a poet ; one who poured out his soul in the music of song. How does a country become great? By producing great folks. Why is it that Scotland, when the roll of nations is called, can stand up and proudly cry, "Here." It is because Robert Burns has lived. It is Robert Burns that puts your well loved Scotland in the front rank of nations.

On the 25th of January, 1759, Robert Burns was born. He was born in a cottage made of mud, thatched with straw. His father was a gardener and his mother a woman that knew a vast amount of poetry. Her memory was stored with songs—and that is all we know about her. From the first poverty was the companion of this babe—poverty the half-sister of Death. The father struggled as best he could. At last overcome, poor man, with misfortunes, he died, aged 63, leaving nothing except the memory of an upright man. This poor boy Robert attended school a little, a very little, down at the old Alloway Mill. He was taught a little by John Murdoch ; a little by his father. That was his education—with this exception that whenever nature produces a genius the old mother holds him close to her heart, and whispers secrets to his ear that others cannot win in any university in the world.

That is the way it is.

In the year 1759 Scotland was emerging from the darkness, from the gloom and sorrow of Calvinism. The attention of the people had gradually been drawn from the other world—or rather from the other two worlds—to this world. The commercial spirit, the interests of trade, were weaning men from the discussion of predestination, damnation and the secret decrees of God. The influence of the clergyman, whose influence had been enormous, was gradually diminishing, and the beggarly elements of this life were beginning to attract the attention of the Scotch. The people of Scotland at the time were rather poor. They had made but little progress in art and science, and the same is true of the rest of the world. They had been engaged for many years in fighting for what they called their political or

theological rights, or to destroy the rights of others. They had great energy, great natural sense and courage, great intellectual animus. I must say they had courage without limit, and it may be well enough to add that they were as obstinate as they were undoubtedly brave.

Several countries have had a metaphysical peasantry. Switzerland had one ; men discussing on the eternal decrees, endeavouring to unravel the infinite puzzle, talking of foreordination, predestination and the saints and all that sort of thing. Holland had a metaphysical peasantry that also discussed foreordination. Scotland had a metaphysical peasantry, men living in thatched cottages, discussing about the will of the Creator, what he intended to do, and in their efforts to harmonize his goodness with having made such a climate as there was in Scotland they had a pretty time of it. We also had a metaphysical peasantry in New England, and there while they were whipping Quakers and persecuting others they were discussing those questions of foreordination and predestination and the perseverance of the saints, that is to say, the five points of Calvinism. They were a very smart, sharp people, and they sharpened their minds with these questions. For many years the Scotch had been ruled by the clergy. You would not think it possible for the clergy to rule the Scotch. You would not think it possible for one Scotchman to rule another if you ever got acquainted with two Scotchmen.

And yet it is true that the clergy had a wonderful influence in Scotland, and why? It so happened that the religion of Scotland became so mixed and mingled with patriotism, or the love of Scotland, that those who loved Scotland took the side of the Scotch kirk. If any other country and any other religion attacked Scotland and its religion the result was that Scotland and the religion went into partnership. And in that way the clergy had an immense influence on that country. This of course drew the priest and the people together, and the priest naturally took advantage of the situation. They not only determined upon the religious path to be pursued by the people, but they went into every detail of life, and there never was established in the

world a more dreadful tyranny than that of the Scotch kirk. They gravely discussed the question whether it was right for a father to endeavour to save his son from drowning who had fallen into the water on Sunday. When the Scotch church had anathematized a child, the question was whether the mother had a right to feed that boy. And it was decided that she had not.

Why, do you know, they executed a poor fellow about the end of that century for having wished that he was in hell, in order that he might get warm, and for having added, that in his judgment Moses was a sleight-of-hand performer.

Still the spirit of trade was growing. The merchant drives out the missionary, and always has, everywhere. That is the reason that the man who has something to sell will always beat the gentleman who has something to give, or that he pretends to give. At that time in Scotland a few men had become famous. David Hume, one of the sublimest of men; a great man, a serene man, one who, had he lived in the olden time would have stood side by side with Zeno; a great man of whom Scotland will be prouder as the years go by, and as Scotland gets more and more civilized. Then there was Ramsay, Reid, Robertson, Beattie, and many others. But the great bulk of the Scotch people at that time were orthodox in every drop of their blood.

It was a Scotch-woman who, on being asked, "Auntie, do you really believe in the doctrine of total depravity?" answered: "I do, I do." "And do you think," he said, "it is a good doctrine?" "Yes I do, and I think it is a great pity that more don't live up to it." They were orthodox and they stood by the doctrine. Why in those blessed days before communion Sunday they would often meet on Friday and have three sermons, three on Saturday and four on Sunday and wind up with a kind of Gospel spree on Monday. They loved it. I think it was Heinrich Heine who said, "It is not true, it is not true that the damned in hell are compelled to hear all the sermons preached on earth." He says this is not true. This shows that there is some mercy even in hell.

Sometimes I have thought that the Scotch

were saved from the gloom of Calvinism by intoxicating liquors. I think there is something in it. It may be John Barleycorn really saved the Scotch from the divine dyspepsia of Calvinism. I really think there must be something in it. I believe the Puritan was saved from his religion by rum. Had there been no rum in New England they would have been persecuting Quakers there even unto this day. So I think schnapps must have saved Holland; and yet in spite of Calvinism, in spite of the mists and fogs, and in spite of the abominable winters of Scotland, that country produced the sweetest and tenderest song of all the world, and the greatest and noblest of our singers, the one who gave us the greatest and noblest song, and that was Robert Burns.

Robert Burns was a child of the people. I am glad of it. Robert Burns was a peasant, a ploughman, and yet a poet.

And why is it that millions and millions of men and women love this man? Why is it? He was a Scotchman, and all the tendrils of his heart struck deep in Scotland soil. He voiced the ideals of the best and greatest of his race, and of his blood. He was patriotic to the last fibre, and yet he is as dear to the citizens of the great Republic as to Scotia's sons and daughters. And why? We, of course, admit that all great poetry has a national flavour. It tastes of the soil. No matter how great it is, how wide, how universal, the flavour of locality is never lost. We love Burns because he made common life beautiful, because he idealized sun-burned girls who worked in the field, because he put honest labour above titled idleness, because he made the cottage far more poetic than the palace, because he painted the simple joys and ecstasies and raptures of sincere love, and because he put native common sense, above the culture of students. We love him because he was independent, sturdy, self-poised, social, generous, thrilled by a look, by a touch, full of pity, carrying the sorrows of others in his heart, those even of enemies; hating to see anybody suffer, lamenting the death of everything, even of trees and flowers. We love him because he was a natural democrat, and because he hated tyranny in every form. We love him because he was always



on the side of the people, and felt the throb of progress.

We know that he read but little. He had but few books, had but little of what we call education, only an outline of history, a little philosophy, none possibly in the highest sense, his library consisting of but a very few volumes, among them Stackhouse's "History of the Bible," one play of Shakespeare's that Shakespeare did not write, and the poems of Ossian written by another man. Burns, however, was a man of genius. This is why we love him. He did not have to read much.

A man of genius is something like a spring, something that suggests no labour. A spring bubbling from the earth seems to be a perpetual free gift of nature. There is no thought of toil. The water comes flowing over the white pebbles and comes without effort, no machinery, no pipes, no engines, no waterworks, nothing that suggests expense or trouble or a mortgage, (laughter) and so a natural poet, it won't do to compare him with the educated, with the polished and with the industrious. He is a spring. And Burns seems to have done everything without effort. His poems wrote themselves. He was overflowing with sympathies and ideas and suggestions on every subject, but there is no midnight oil, there is nothing in him of the student; there is no suggestion of one of his poems having been re-written or re-cast. No trouble. There is in his heart a poetical April and May, and all the poetic seeds burst into sudden life. In a moment the seed is a plant, the plant is a blossom, and the fruit is given to the world. He looks at everything from a natural point of view, and he had the sense to write about men and women with whom he was acquainted. He cared nothing for mythology, nothing for the legends of the Greeks and Romans. He drew nothing from history. Everything he speaks about was within his reach, and he knew it from centre to circumference, all his figures and comparisons perfectly natural.

He does not endeavour to make angels of fine ladies. He takes the servant girls with whom he is acquainted, the dairy maids whom he knows, and he puts wings on those servants and on those dairy-maids, and makes them angels that the angels themselves would be

envious of. That is what Robert Burns did. He did not make women of goddesses, but he made goddesses of women. This man, so natural, keeping his cheek so close to the breast of nature, never thought that Pope and Churchill and Thomson were poets. Some things we cannot account for. His first poem was addressed to the daughter of the blacksmith. Next he was in love with Ellison Begbie—offered her his heart and hand, and was refused. She was a servant working in a family. Jean Armour, his wife, was a daughter of a tailor, and her father objected to his daughter, being a daughter of a respectable tailor, uniting herself in marriage with Robert Burns. Highland Mary was a servant, a milk-maid. Burns, as I say, did not make women of goddesses, but he made goddesses of women. After all, the highest art keeps close to the ground. If you want to be sublime, cling to the grass. There never was a picture painted of a palace that was poetic. A palace suggests weariness, and pomp, and circumstance and responsibility. If you want that which is poetic you must paint a cottage with climbing vines, with trees in bloom, with bees that make their singing journeys around the house, with children natural. The simple, necessary things of life are always poetic. Take for instance one of the books of the Bible. The Songs of Solomon. They believed for many years that Solomon wrote that song, but the moment I read it I knew he did not, and I know now that he did not. And I will tell you why. Solomon was king, and in the song he praises the palace. He dwells on the delights of the king's chambers. Now that was written by a peasant, who believed that the palace was filled with joy. Had it been written by a king, one who knew better, he would have had happiness in the cottage, in the field, under the arching vine. And if you read Solomon's song some time, if you have time to waste, you will find that I am right on that subject. Fine ladies robed in jewels are not poetic. Never. They are artificial, but not artistic. After all, art is the highest possible expression of the natural. It must not suggest labour or toil or trouble or responsibility. It must suggest liberty and freedom.

Burns, above all things—and that is why

we love him, maybe—was the poet of love. To him woman was divine, and in the light in her eyes this peasant stood transfigured. Love changed this ploughman to a king. The plaid became a robe of purple. The poor man became the poet and the labourer was the ennobled man who stood like a descended God. In his "Vision" his native muse tells the story of his conversion and how he came to write. Was there ever a sweeter singer? Will there ever be a sweeter song written than "Bonnie Doon," and there is in it too a wealth of philosophy. A poor broken-hearted girl wandering by a stream says to the bird: "Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird."

There is an idea that when the weather is bad, when it is overcast, when all is gloom, that then the heart of man cannot bear its trouble as it can in the sunshine. That is a mistake. By far the greater number of suicides are committed when the sun shines, and when all is life and gaiety in the world, and the poor wretch, with such rack and ruin in his heart, compares the sunshine of the earth with the darkness within, and the contrast he cannot bear. Burns understood that philosophy long before the statistics had verified the fact.

It would consume days to give you, to go over those tender lines, lines wet with the heart's blood, lines that throb and thrill, lines that glow like flame—lines full of love and and death, the beautiful, the sublime, the pathetic; but the most beautiful love poem that I know, that I have ever read, one pure as the tear of gratitude, is to "Mary in Heaven." Had Burns written nothing else, every man who has ever loved woman would keep the name of Burns within his heart.

Above all of Scotland's queens rises this pure and gentle girl made deathless by the love of Robert Burns.

A ploughman and a servant, a peasant and a milkmaid, the two most royal children that Scotland boasts; royal because upon the brow of the peasant is the laureled crown, and in the hand of the milkmaid is the sceptre that stirs all hearts. Burns was also a poet of home, the poet of the fireside, of father and mother and child, and all the purest that is in wedded life. In the

"Cottar's Saturday Night," one of the noblest and sweetest poems in the literature of our world is a description of the cottar going home from his labours, and it is a great picture that will live as long as language lives. And in the same poem is described the courtship. It is lovely, beautiful. Where is there in this world a more beautiful and more touching picture than that of the old couple sitting on the ingleside with clasped hands? There never will be a greater poem upon this subject than "John Anderson, my Jo." Burns taught that love of wife and child was the highest kind of love, and the noblest. Burns finally sums up what you would call the whole duty of man in four lines in one of his letters to Dr. Blacklock. To make a happy fireside was the highest aim in human life.

To mak a happy fireside clime for weans and wife,  
That's the true pathos and sublime o' human life.

I wish that had been written in stone.

Burns had another art, the art of stopping; the art of stopping at the right place. Nothing is more difficult than this. It is very hard to end a play. It is very hard to get the right kind of roof on a house. There is not one story-teller in a thousand that knows just the place where the rocket ought to explode. They go on talking after the stick has come down.

Burns wrote short poems, and why? All poems are short. There cannot be a long poem any more than there can be a long joke. Burns knew when to stop. I believe the best example of an ending perfectly accomplished you will find in his "Vision." There comes into his house, into that auld clay biggin', his muse, the spirit of a beautiful woman, and tells him what he can do, and what he can't do as a poet. He conversed with her; he has a long talk with her and now the thing is how to get her out of the house. You may think that is an easy thing. It is easy enough to get yourself into difficulty, but not to get out. But I was struck with the beautiful manner in which Burns got that angel out of the house. "And like a passing thought she fled, in light away." That is the way he got her out of the house.

Burns above all that I know was a poet of

friendship. "Should auld acquaintance be forgot." Wherever those who speak the English language assemble, wherever the Anglo Saxon people meet with clasp and smile, "Auld Lang Syne" will tremble in the happy air. And it is never to be forgotten.

Burns was the friend of the merry meeting. He has written the best drinking songs ever written by mortal man, and say what we will against intemperance, say what we will against alcohol, I feel towards it somewhat as Burns did towards the devil, that he had some good sides. It is somewhat difficult to be exceedingly sociable on cold water. There does go with wine, there does go I say with that, a certain good-fellowship, a certain flow of thought, a certain amplitude of feeling. Nothing else can produce it so far as I know, and there never was a people on the earth that could pass the cup or glass with a more delightful smile than the sons of Scotland. Burns was the poet of a good Scotch drink. And it is somewhat wonderful a man said to me to-night: "No nation has ever amounted to anything without they drank a good deal." All these temperance nations, he says, have gone backwards. Well you can study that out for yourself. But I do think that the little old song of "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut" is the best drinking song that was ever written. And, do you know, I went down to that place where "Willie brewed the peck o' maut" and I felt like taking a drink myself, when I read that drinking song of Burns:

"We are na fou; we're no that fou,  
But just a drappie in our e'e;  
The cock may crawl, the day may daw,  
But aye we'll taste the barley bree."

There is no better drinking song than that in the world, and I would have liked to have been there that night.

I have a good notion to tell you something. Not long ago I was dining with some gentlemen, and next me sat a minister. He was bound to get into good company for once in his life. He was talking a little on the subject of religion, and I finally asked him, "Now," said I, "you have talked so much about the apostles and the Lord, and all that sort of thing; now will you be honour bright with me and answer me a question?"

Well, "If I tell you, you won't tell on me will you?" Well, I said, "I know what your answer is then, because, if you had been going to say one of the apostles, you never would have told me not to tell."

Burns knew that poets could not be made. He knew that education had nothing to do with genius. He knew the university could not furnish capacity nor genius, it could not furnish that divine atmosphere.

Besides this, Burns was a very great artist. He has painted some of the most wonderful word pictures in the human language. His description of a brook in "Hallowe'en" is one of the most exquisite things that has ever been my good fortune to read.

"Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,  
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;  
Whyles round a rocky scar it strays:  
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;  
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,  
Wi' bickerin', dancin' dazzle;  
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,  
Below the spreading hazel,  
Unseen that nicht."

Just read that over to yourselves some day five or six times. All his work is of this character, so beautiful, so simple, and so natural. It is splendid. Take the picture in Highland Mary. He pictures love in the breast of a sweet girl. It is beautiful. Think too of his description at the commencement of his vision. That shows his descriptive powers at their very best, and proves what a true poet this man is.

There is another reason why we love Robert Burns. He is a democrat of the right kind. He was in every fibre of his being a sincere democrat, and not for the sake of revenue. He was a believer in the people, and in the sacred rights of man. He believed that honest peasants were superior to titled parasites. He knew the so-called gentry of his time. In one of his letters to a friend he says it takes a few dashes into the world to give a young man a proper, decent regard for the poor insignificant devils of mechanics and peasantry. He understood the gentry. He knew the crushing spirit of caste, the infernally cruel spirit of caste, the spirit that despises the useful, and that depreciates the work of the toiler, those who bear the burdens of this world.



Burns rebelled against the injustice of his time, against the artificial distinctions among men. His loyal soul broke out in that magnificent protest which took the form of what is, perhaps, the greatest of all his poems, "A man's a man for a' that."

Every line of that poem came throbbing with life from his great heart, and since that poem has been written there has been more manhood in the world. Men have been prouder of their hearts and of themselves, without taking into account whether they were clothed in robes or rags.

If there is anything nobler in our language, I have never read it. No grander Declaration of Independence was ever given to the world. It is the apotheosis of independence since it was written. It is a forerunner of that very day when men will be brothers the world over.

Burns was not only a poet, not only the poet of love and friendship, not only an artist, and not only a democrat, but in heart he was a theologian. He had theology too. He was superior in heart and brain to the theologians of his time. He knew that the creed of John Calvin was cruel and absurd, and he attacked it with all his might and main. He was not awed by the clergy, and he cared but very little for authority. He insisted on thinking for himself. Sometimes he may have faltered a little, fearing that some friend of his might take offence. Sometimes he would say or write a word or two in favour of the Bible, and sometimes he addressed the Kirk in words of scorn. But there is one thing he did that I like, perhaps above all—he laughed at the dogma of eternal pain. He knew that if man was to suffer forever that God must be a dreadful tyrant, a monster. The dear old doctrine that man is totally depraved he threw aside. He refused absolutely to receive it.

He understood the hypocrites of his time. "They tak' religion in their mouth," says he. Can you conceive what a detestation he had of hypocrites? The strongest thing that was ever written against Calvinism is "Holy Willie's Prayer." In this poem you will find the Calvinistic creed stated with perfect fairness and accuracy. In this poem Burns nailed Calvinism to the cross. He put it on the rack and burned it to the stake.

In 1787 Burns, being still a theologian, he made some slight concessions in letters written to friends who were of the orthodox faith. These must have been written in the spirit of flattery. It is not for me to say exactly what Burns believed. I am going to let *him* say it: "An honest man has nothing to fear." That is pretty good doctrine, no matter whether he believes in the Bible or not. If that part of us called mind does survive, then I say: "Away with the old-wife prejudices and doctrines."

Burns' religion was of the same stamp as that of Voltaire, of Thomas Jefferson, of Thomas Paine and of Abraham Lincoln.

Burns also said another thing in which there is a vast amount of wisdom, when he asks this question: "Why has a religious turn of mind always a tendency to narrow and harden the heart?"

A little while ago one of the greatest poets died, and I was reading one of his volumes, and at the same time during the same period reading a little from Robert Burns, and the difference between these two men struck me so forcibly that I concluded to say something about it to-night. Tennyson was a piece of rare china decorated by the highest art. Burns was made of honest human clay moulded by sympathy and love. Tennyson dwelt in his fancy for the most part with kings and queens, with lords and ladies, and with counts and nobles. Burns lingered by the firesides of the poor and humble, in the thatched cottage of the peasant. He loved men and women, and without regard to the outlook. Tennyson was touched by place and birth, and by the insignia given by birth and chance of fortune. As he grew old he grew narrower, and less in touch with the world around him. Tennyson was ingenious, Burns ingenuous. Tennyson had intellectual taste, Burns' brain was the servant of his heart. One was exclusive, and the other pressed the world against his breast. Burns was touched by wrongs and injustice. Tennyson touched art on many sides, writing no doubt of lordly things, dealing with the vast poesies of his brain, and he satisfied the taste of cultured men. Tennyson is always self-possessed. He possesses in abundance poetic sympathy, but lacks the fire and the flame. Burns dwells

on simple things, on things that touch the heart and arouse the highest sympathies of men. The religion of Burns was great enough to include everything. Tennyson's imagination lived in a palace. The imagination of Burns dwelt lower down, among the people; his heart went out to them, and he recorded the poems of their simple life in an imperishable verse. His songs were sweet harmonies drawn from the breast of nature.

Tennyson, as I say, satisfied in many ways the tastes of cultured men, and he is always perfectly self-possessed. From his heart there emanates no burst of song that thrills and inspires. No one ever thinks of him as having been carried away by stormy feelings, but as a great artist he has a claim, an undisputed claim, to a high place in the world of letters. Burns dealt with simple things, with those that touch the heart of the husband and wife, the mother and the pure young girl. He spoke of the common things, of life and love and death, and joy and hope. His sympathies were in accord with the hearts of his fellow men. Both men were great poets. Tennyson appealed to the intellectual in his readers, Burns to the tenderest feelings of the soul. Men admire Tennyson. Men love Robert Burns.

Sometimes the outspoken expression of the poet, the impulses of his heart, made him enemies. He made enemies because he sympathized with the French revolution, and because he was glad that the American colonies had become a nation. At a banquet once, being asked to drink the health of Pitt, Burns said: "I will give you a better toast—George Washington." A little while after, when they wanted him to drink to the success of the English arms, Burns said: "No; I will drink this: May their success equal the justice of their cause." He sent three or four little cannon to the French convention, because he sympathized with the French revolution, and because of these little things, his love of liberty, of freedom and justice, at Dumfries he was suspected of being a traitor, and, as a result of these trivial things, as a result of that suspicion, Burns was obliged to join the Dumfries volunteers. And thereby hangs a tale. He had to buy a uniform, which he bought on credit—seven

pounds. It was bought from Matthew Pen, and afterwards when he was sick, nigh unto death, when he had to be taken to the shore of the sea, Matthew Pen insisted on putting his emaciated body into jail for the money expended by Burns for the uniform in which to join the Dumfries volunteers, to prove that the man who wrote "Scots Wha Hae," was not a traitor. The last work he ever did in his life was to write two letters, one to a cousin to send him a few pounds to save him from the horrors of a jail. He came back to Dumfries a dying man, and for a few days longer, the brief space of time that he lived, all that time his brain was troubled with that claim of Matthew Pen. When he was dying, the very last words uttered by Robert Burns, with the vision of a jail in his mind, the last words that came from his lips were these: "That damned scoundrel, Matthew Pen." And when a few days before, knowing that he was to die, he begged that the awkward squad, meaning the Dumfries Volunteers, should not be allowed to fire over his grave, we have a true insight into what his feelings were. But they fired. They were bound to fire or die.

How that man rose above all his fellows in death! Do you know, there is something wonderful in death. What a repose! What a piece of sculpture! The common man dead looks royal, a genius dead, sublime.

Then a few years ago I visited all the places where Burns had been, from the little house of clay with one room where he was born, to the little house with one room where he now sleeps, I thought of this. Yes, I visited them all, all the places made immortal by his genius, in the field where love first touched his heart, in the field where he ploughed up the home of the mouse. I saw the cottage where Robert and Jean first lived as man and wife and walked on "the banks and braes of bonnie Doon," and all the other places rendered immortal by his genius, and when I stood by his grave I said: This man was a great man. He was a radical. This man believed in the dignity of labour, in the nobility of the useful. This man believed in human love, in making a heaven here, in judging men by their deeds instead of by their wealth and title. This man believed in

a pure heart and soul, and in the liberty of the soul, the liberty of thought and speech. This man believed in the rights of individual, the sacred rights of individual independence. This man sympathized with the suffering and oppressed. This man had the genius to change suffering and sorrow into song, to enrich poverty and make it blessed to be poor, to fill the lives of the lowly with love and light. This man had the genius to make robes of glory out of squalid rags. The name of Robert Burns can never die. He is enrolled among the immortals and will live forever. This man left a legacy of riches untold, not only to Scotland but the whole world. He enriched our language and among succeeding generations with a generous hand he has scattered the gems of thought. His heart blossomed in a thousand songs, songs for all times and all seasons, suited to every experience of the heart and to every phase of thought; songs for the dawn of life, songs for the cradle, songs for growing boy and girlhood, songs for the hour of courtship and for the sweet and sacred relationship of man and wife; songs for the cheerless and the friendless, songs of hope for the despairing, songs of love for the unloved, songs of joy for the joyless, songs for the vanished days, and songs that were filled

with light and hope for days to come; songs for the sunshine and for the storm, songs that set the pulses throbbing and stir the heart of man.

And when I was at his birth-place, at that very little clay house where he was born, standing in that sacred place, I wrote these lines:

“ Though Scotland boasts a thousand names,  
Of patriot, king and peer,  
The noblest, grandest of them all,  
Was loved and cradled here.  
Here lived the gentle peasant prince,  
The loving cottar king,  
Compared with whom the greatest prince  
Is but a titled thing.

’Tis but a cot roofed in with straw,  
A hovel made of clay;  
One door shuts out the snow and storm,  
One window greets the day;  
And yet I stand within this room,  
And hold all thrones in scorn;  
For here beneath this lowly roof  
Love’s sweetest bard was born.

Within this hallowed hut I feel  
Like one who clasps a shrine,  
When the glad lips at last have touched  
The something deemed divine.  
And here the world through all the years,  
As long as day returns,  
The tribute of its love and tears,  
Will pay to Robert Burns.”

#### IV.—PRINCE AND PEASANT.

BY ROBERT HOGG.

LANGSYNE, upo’ a simmer day,  
A King had got an heir,  
An’ lords an’ ladies gleg an’ gay  
Brocht hansels rich an’ rare.  
An’ princes prood frae owre the main  
Were brocht “the prince” to see—  
King, prince and coort, are langsyne gane,  
An’ lost to memorie.

When Jan’wur win’s blew bleak through Ayr,  
In a wee cot ae morn  
Some twa-three neebours gathered were  
To see a wean new-born.

It didna witch the world’s ear,  
’Twas but a peasant’s birth—  
Noo that wean’s name frae year to year  
Gangs circlin’ roon the earth.

The prince, wha’s life did thus begin,  
’Mang ploys whilk maun hae deeved,  
Some doot if there wis sic a ane,  
Some sweer he never leeved.  
The bairn born i’ that but-an-ben,  
’Mang cauld an’ cranreuch care,  
Wha sae unblest as no’ to ken  
The Daithless Bard o’ Ayr?



## V.—THE BURNS STATUE IN ABERDEEN.

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THE Burns statue for Aberdeen was formally unveiled yesterday afternoon, September 15th, 1892, by Professor Masson, Edinburgh, in presence of about 6000 onlookers. The statue, which has been erected on a prominent site in Union Terrace, was successfully placed on the pedestal on Tuesday afternoon, and all who have seen it agree that it is an excellent piece of sculpture, and a credit to the artist, Mr. Henry Bainsmith, formerly of Aberdeen, and now of London. The monument is the gift, to the town, of admirers of the poet, and is a distinct addition to the artistic features of Union Terrace, and to the amenity of the locality generally. Opposite the statue a raised platform was erected, where those specially invited to witness the unveiling ceremony were accommodated. The platform presented a beautiful appearance, being covered with crimson cloth, and hung with gaily-coloured flags. From the upper windows of the Conservative Club were displayed three large banners. The statue was draped with the Union Jack, attached by cords to a flagstaff behind, to aid the operation of unveiling. To the end of the unveiling cord was affixed a tassel of chaste design. The tassel, which was of solid silver, was—a most fitting emblem for such a ceremony—in the shape of a Scotch thistle. On one side were engraved the *Bon-Accord Arms*, while the other bore the following inscription :—

To

PROFESSOR MASSON, OF EDINBURGH,

As a souvenir of his unveiling

THE BURNS STATUE AT ABERDEEN,

on 15th September, 1892.

The members of the Burns Committee met in the Palace Hotel at a quarter before two o'clock, amongst those present being Bailie Mearns, Dr. Alexander, Mr. William Carnie, Mr. James Davidson, Mr. John Bruce, Dr. James Moir, Mr. Peter Crombie, Mr. William Henderson, Devanha House; Treasurer Morgan, Dean of Guild Walker, Mr. William Cadenhead, Mr. William Pyper of Hillhead; Mr. J. H. Bisset, Mr. G. W. Wilson, Mr.

James M'Intosh. Professor Masson, along with Mrs. Masson, Professor Niven, Mrs. Niven, and the Misses Stewart, Banchory House, arrived at the hotel a few minutes before two o'clock. A start was soon afterwards made for Union Terrace. In the meantime the platform was well filled. Lord Provost Stewart—whose guest Professor Masson is—and the Magistrates and members of the Town Council were mostly all present, together with a full representation of the members of the Burns Committee and subscribers to the fund generally. Outside the enclosed area a large and interested crowd assembled, and much enthusiasm was manifested. Mr. Mann's new Grand Hotel seemed a favourable point from which to view the ceremony, and every spot from which a glimpse could be got of the statue and of the platform was fully occupied. Professor Masson, took up a position at the top of the stairway, along with Lord Provost Stewart, Sir William Geddes, Dr. Bain, and Mr. Forbes Robertson. The car and vehicular traffic in Union Terrace was stopped, and Chief Constable Wyness marched a large body of police to the ground. Lord Provost Stewart, who wore his chain of office, called at once upon the chairman of the Burns Committee,

Bailie MEARNs, who was received with cheers, and who said—The duty which it has fallen to me to perform is an exceedingly pleasing one—to introduce to you Professor Masson, who has so kindly acceded to our request to come and unveil the statue of Scotland's greatest Son of Song, Robert Burns. Professor Masson is no stranger to Aberdeen. He is not only a true son of *Bon-Accord*, but an honour to our country. After finishing his education at Marischal College and Edinburgh University, he became, at the early age of 19, editor of a Scotch provincial newspaper, and three years afterwards migrated to London, contributing to "*Fraser's Magazine*" and the other periodicals of that date. A year afterwards, he is found again in the metropolis of Scotland,

and for a couple of years was engaged in literary work for the Messrs. Chambers in their magazine. He then returned to London and resumed his avocations as a *litterateur*, and in 1852 was appointed to the professorship of English Language and Literature in the University College of London. When "Macmillan's Magazine" was started in 1859, Professor Masson was its first editor, and contributed largely to its earlier numbers: notably a series of sketches which appeared in '63, '64, and '65, on "Dead Men I Have Known; or, Recollections of Three Cities—Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and London," giving, so far as Aberdeen is concerned, vivid sketches of such notable men as Dr. Kidd, Dr. Melvin, of Grammar School celebrity; Dr. Knight, of Marischal College; Robertson of Craigmadam, and Thom, the Inverurie poet. In 1865 he was elected Professor of English Literature in the University of Edinburgh on the death of Professor Aytoun. But ladies and gentlemen, it is principally as an author that Professor Masson is known. His "Life of Milton and the History of his Time," the most authoritative work on this subject yet published, occupied twenty years of his otherwise busy life; the first of the six volumes appearing in 1857 and the last in 1880. He has also edited Milton's poetical works, with introductory notes and essay, which has been reproduced in the "Golden Treasury" and "Globe" Series. His essays, biographical and critical, chiefly on the English poets, and his Edinburgh sketches and memories, published so recently as May last, consisting of delightful and brilliant reminiscences of the past history of Edinburgh, and accounts of some of its literary residents, such as Allan Ramsay, Lady Wardlaw, the Baroness Nairne, Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Walter Scott, John Hill Burton, and Dr. John Brown, and his many other works, all testify to the true worth of the man. He was the intimate acquaintance and friend of Carlyle, whose essay on Burns is unquestionably the best yet written of him in whose honour we meet to-day; and quite recently he was selected to unveil the bust of that great master mind in the Wallace Monument. Your committee, in looking around for some one to unveil the statue of Burns, hit on the worthy Professor, who at once

kindly agreed to their request, and is now in our midst for that purpose. Having now formally introduced him, I have to ask him to perform the ceremony of unveiling and handing over to the city the statue of the Prince of Scottish Song—(loud cheers).

#### THE CEREMONY.

The unveiling was then, amid enthusiastic cheers, performed by Professor Masson. The cord which Professor Masson pulled did not seem particularly strong, and gave way to slight pressure. Some laughter was occasioned, which, however, was immediately afterwards turned into cheers when the Union Jack slipped from the monument, and the Scottish Standard ran up on the flagstaff behind. The crowd had been growing greatly in numbers, and the whole line of Union Terrace was densely crowded.

Professor MASSON, speaking amid cheers, said—"The world is really served only by the *extraordinary*." Such is one of the sayings of a man reputed among the wisest of modern times; and, like every other of his sayings, it is deeply considered, and hits the nail on the head. It means, or implies, that all those men who are remembered as having served the world greatly and conspicuously in any department of its affairs have been men who, somehow, have burst previous bounds. If this is true of any one on the list of the famous dead, it is certainly true of him in honour of whose memory we are now assembled:—

"There was a lad was born in Kyle;  
But whatna day or whatna style  
I doubt it's hardly worth the while  
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

Our monarch's hindmost year but aye  
Was five and twenty days begun;  
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'  
Blew hansel in on Robin.

The gossip keekit in his loof;  
Quo' scho,—'Wha lives will see the proof;  
This waly boy will be nae coof:  
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',  
But aye a heart aboon them a';  
He'll be a credit to us a';  
We'll a' be proud o' Robin."

Burns was extraordinary, we may say in the first place, in that he burst the bonds of



his time in the poetry of the British Islands. It is now a commonplace in our histories of British Literature that the century or so that followed the death of Milton was, with some exceptions, a period of abeyance throughout the British Islands of all genuine poetry of the higher order, and even of the very notion of what genuine and high poetry is, and that the revival both of the notion and of the thing must date from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when Cowper and Crabbe had appeared, and Wordsworth was about to present himself. Well, so far as we may accept this view, it is Burns that has to be pointed to as the Scottish coadjutor of Cowper and Crabbe, and the Scottish predecessor of Wordsworth, in this great revival. Nay, if Wordsworth himself is to be the authority, Cowper and Crabbe must drop out of the account, in comparison with Burns. It was not either Cowper or Crabbe that Wordsworth acknowledged as his real predecessor and inspirer, but the Scottish ploughman-poet. Wordsworth had read the poems of Burns on their first appearance, and their effects upon him had been such that, when he heard the news, ten years afterwards, of Burns's death, he felt, he tells us, as if he had lost an elder brother :—

“ I mourned with thousands, but as one  
More deeply grieved ; for he was gone  
Whose light I hailed when first it shone  
And showed my youth  
How Verse may build a princely throne  
On humble truth.”

In other words, it was Burns that had first given Wordsworth the conception of that species of poetry which he had vowed to spend all his own future life in exemplifying and expounding to the English nation,—the poetry, as he defined it, of a return to the elemental in matter, and to the natural in language, after long and vicious perseverance in the merely artificial and conventional, and of a preference, in that interest, for themes taken from lowly and common life. Burns, without theorising so much about poetry as Wordsworth did, had announced himself in the very character claimed for him by Wordsworth. When, on the impulse of his genius, he had first perceived that poetry was to be his true vocation, a voice within him, he tells us, had warned him thus :—

“ There's ither poets, much your betters,  
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,  
Hae thoct they had ensured their debtors  
A' future ages :  
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters  
Their unknown pages.”

His reply had been :—

“ Then fareweel hopes o' laurel-boughs  
To garland *my* poetic brows !  
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs  
Are whistlin' thrang,  
And teach the lanely heights and howes  
My rustic sang.”

Herein, were there nothing else, Burns was undoubtedly extraordinary, and did service to correspond. By stepping forth in the guise of a rustic poet writing on homely themes, and for the common people of his own country in their own dialect, but at the same time, and perhaps all the more strikingly by that means, illustrating the necessity and the efficacy of a return to Fact and Nature, and to the intrinsically and universally human, in all poetry whatsoever, he constituted himself, more distinctly than any of his contemporaries, the hinging personality at that epoch or turning-point of British Literary History where the eighteenth century opens into the nineteenth. Burns was extraordinary also in respect of that element of opinion, of thought and reasoning about things in general, which he breathed into his poetry. The testimonies respecting Burns personally that have come down to us from those who knew him well are singularly unanimous in declaring that, even apart from his poetry, he impressed enormously by the general strength and versatility of his intellect. “ The idea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings,” is the testimony of Dugald Stewart, reiterated by him in the statement : “ All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous.” This, from the eminent and placid philosopher, would have been enough, even if there were not the corroboration furnished by the numerous other descriptions of the living Burns as he moved about among his fellows. Who does not know the essentials of the transmitted portrait,—the strong and massive figure, the swarthy face, the large and glowing eyes, the uncringing manliness

of his demeanour in whatever company, the blazing impetuosity of his address when anger or some other passion roused him and the sorcery and charm of its gentleness at other moments, the rapidity of his changes of mood from the most fervidly earnest to the most extravagantly humorous or the most pathetically tender, and the readiness, eloquence, and pregnancy of his talk in any mood and on any subject? Well, though much of the intellect of Burns, with much of what may be called his creed, has thus been lost by his mere casual distribution of it, right and left, among his familiars and coevals, his principal opinions on not a few subjects are bedded sufficiently in his poetry. In his epistles and satirical poems, more especially, he spoke out his mind very freely on the various questions, social, political, and theological, that were agitating the Scotland of his day. For example,

“ There’s a heretic blast has been blawn in the Wast,—  
That what isna sense must be nonsense.”

This is an ironical expression of Burns’s attitude in relation to one particular Scottish controversy of his time; but it is much more. Not only did he himself propagate with all his might the particular “heretic blast” which he describes thus ironically; but, generally and in all matters whatsoever, the substance of his advice to his countrymen consisted in an exhortation to them always to treat as nonsense what they could not rationally interpret into sense. On this account, and the rather because he indicated, boldly enough, what he himself regarded as the forms of nonsense then most current in Scotland, he may be said to have fulfilled for the Scotland of his generation the public function which the Germans describe as that of the “illuminant.” In more than a score of his poems, as you all know, he is seen working vehemently in this function, but most tremendously of all, as you know, in those in which he employs flame as his illuminating agency, and it is against conscious cant and hideous hypocrisy that he directs his blasts. Now, though he may have gone to excess in both the classes of his satirical exposures, whether those in which he merely jetted his wit against what he thought nonsensical, or those in which he

denounced unmercifully what he thought cant and hypocrisy, it cannot be denied, and it is not now denied anywhere, that the service he did for Scottish society and Scottish thought by those exposures was, on the whole, signally beneficial. It may be compared to that sometimes performed by a resolute and energetic physician. Such a physician, visiting a fever-stricken patient in some outlying and single-roomed cottage of his district, finds the hovel, let us say, so dark that he has to grope his way towards the bed, the atmosphere close and fetid, nothing but litter on the floor, and the single window,—or what was once a window, for the panes of glass are gone,—stuffed up with clouts, pieces of old hats, or what not else. Before he has examined the patient, before he has asked a question, what does he do? He goes up to the window, and with his stick, his umbrella, or his fist, he dashes out the stuffing of clouts and shreds of old hat, and lets in air and light. That is what I call a beneficial bursting of bounds; and one of Burns’s fashions of bursting bounds in the Scotland of his time was not unlike. Burns, it has to be added, burst bounds in his own life and conduct. All the world knows *that*, and is agreed, moreover, that it was an illegitimate bursting of bounds, and indefensible. When that has been said and agreed upon, however, what more is needed on the matter at this time of day? We have heard enough and to spare already about the immoralities of Burns, the irregularities of his life; and why go back everlastingly on that subject? The account has been closed, and the subject is outworn. Should anyone, here or there, still persist too pertinaciously in resuscitating it, the Scottish people have made up their minds, the best and saintliest men among them concurring or not dissenting, what to think of that person, and what to say to him. “Who are you that would act the resurrectionist now at *this* grave?” is what they virtually say, and might well say openly: “the real question, sir, is not what *you* think of Burns, but what Burns would have thought of *you*.” In one respect only is there some permanent interest still in the recollection that Burns, besides being extraordinary in better ways, was extraordinary also in this. Part of the value of Burns’s life,

part of its perennial interest, consists in its having been to so large an extent a tragedy ; and it is here, chiefly here, that the tragic element comes in. I never realised this so distinctly, never felt the sadness of Burns's life, and the grandeur of its sadness, so keenly, as I was able to do about three weeks ago, when I visited, almost by accident, the spot of Scottish earth made sacred by his footsteps when he knew himself to be a dying man. On the shore of the Solway Firth, a few miles from Dumfries, is a small hamlet called Brow. It consists of two or three cottages by the side of a country road running parallel to the Firth ; off from which cottages there goes a strip of smooth grassy ground leading to the margin of the Firth itself, also grassy in the main till the sands and ooze are reached, but broken into ridges and dotted with salt hyphen water pools. Close to the cottages, and in the middle of the strip of verdant ground leading from them to the Solway, is a saline well, called "The Brow Well," now a mere muddy splash enclosed within a wall, but still resorted to for its supposed medicinal virtues, and once of greater local fame on that account. It was on the 4th of July, 1796, that Burns, then in the last stage of emaciation and debility, after six months of his fatal illness, harassed for money, and out of countenance with most of his former friends, was taken, by medical advice, from Dumfries to Brow, for such benefit as might still be possible for him from the Brow Well, country air, and sea bathing. For exactly a fortnight he tried the vain experiment ; but on the 18th of July he returned to Dumfries, to die there on the 21st. What a fortnight that, and in what a life ! On the spot itself this feeling came upon me overpoweringly. I saw the humble cottage in which the broken-down invalid was quartered, and, in a corner of the cottage garden, the seat under a thorn tree where he rested his weary frame ; and I paced the promenade of soft green hyphen sward along which he had dragged his tottering limbs seawards, looking out on the Solway and its pools, and taking his farewell of that scene, and of all the rest of the scenery of the world. O, with what meditations in his mind—meditations backwards and meditations forwards ! Forwards, there was the anguish-

ing thought of his wife and children, so poorly provided for, and of what was to become of them after he was gone ; backwards, there was the thought of his own past life—what it had actually been, and in what respects it might have been different. No man ever died, no man ever will die, with a conscience exempting him from the necessity of self-reproach and self-humiliation in such a retrospect ; but the tragic peculiarity in the case of Burns is that here, partly by cruel fate and partly by his own default, the man of most powerful brain and of richest heart in all Scotland was dying ere he had reached the mid-point of his natural life and of its total possibilities. It is a century ago now, all save four years since Burns died, and he seems removed from us, therefore, into a far-off and shadowy past ; but it ought not to be forgotten that he died in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and that, had he lived to the ordinary span of old age, he might have been seen and known in his later days by many still alive, and perhaps by some of ourselves. All the literary remains of Burns are extraordinary individually in their several kinds, or have some touch of the extraordinary. They consist of about 300 songs, about 200 pieces of miscellaneous verse, and a number of roughly-written prose letters ; and they are an inheritance of recognised worth for the whole British Empire. They can be read and enjoyed, to some extent, in England ; and pithy lines and phrases from them have passed into the universal English speech. But, pre-eminently and peculiarly, Burns is the poet of his own Scotland. He seized the Scottish language when it seemed about to become defunct in literature, made it classic once more, and gave it a new lease of life. The poetry of Burns, unlike a good deal of poetry recently written in provincial English dialects, is no mere factitious conversion into a vernacular of what might have been in ordinary English ; it could not have existed in ordinary English, so incorporate is the matter, the thought and feeling, with the vocabulary employed, and even with the Scottish grammatical idiom. Hence the full relish of Burns's most characteristic pieces of the descriptive, narrative, and satirical sorts is reserved for his own countrymen. And



then his songs—those matchless songs of Burns which have been sung now for three generations in Scottish households, are sung there still, and over which Scotsmen in their convivial gatherings anywhere over the earth become tumultuous and ecstatic! The songs and the poems together, it may be doubted whether any poet of any nation since the world began ever sank so deeply and fondly into the hearts and memories of the people of Scotland. He is the supreme poet of Scotland by every claim to that title. He is the poet of Scottish scenery, especially of the scenery of the Scottish Lowlands. He is the poet of Scottish life, Scottish manners, and Scottish humours; and what a range in his poems of this order, from the calm and deep religiousness of his "Cottar's Saturday Night"—there are some who decry that poem now, God pity them!—to the lawless rollick and daring of his "Jolly Beggars!" He is the poet of all varieties of Scottish sentiment. Take the sentiment of Scottish nationality itself. Is not the Scottish national lyric for all time Burns's "Scots Wha Hae?" Some critics of late have been sneering even at that lyric, finding fault with it on account of some finical objections to the wording, but in reality disliking the sentiment it would immortalise, and voting it obsolete and barbaric. One must differ here from the critics, whoever they are. The wording of the lyric accords with the sentiment; and both are grand. For the sentiment of Scottish nationality is not something barbaric and obsolete, the poetical expression of which is justifiable only on historical grounds; it exists indestructibly yet among the powers and forces of the present composite and united British body politic, and is capable of services in the affairs of that body politic that may be of incalculable utility even yet. Imagine a Scottish regiment on a foreign battlefield. Imagine it driven back for the moment, foiled, fatigued, and dispirited. "Scots Wha Hae" shouts their commander, or someone else; and no more is needed. They recollect, or half-recollect, the rest:—

"Wha for Scotland's king and law  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
Freeman stand or freeman fa',  
Let him on wi' me."

They thrill with that recollection, or half recollection; they rally as they thrill; the Scottish soul returns in them; they face about again; they are unconquerable now; they fight and die like demigods! This is not imagination merely, but verifiable fact; nor is it in such cases only of collective action by Scotsmen that the love of their country is found nerving to higher and still higher exertion. It has this effect among them individually; and Burns himself is an instance. What does he tell us of his resolves and aspirations when he was still but a beardless youth, holding the plough or shearing the corn?—

"Even then a wish I mind its power,  
A wish that to my latest hour  
Shall strongly heave my breast,—  
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake  
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,  
Or sing a sang at least."

Not to be forgotten in this connection, whatever else must be left unmentioned, is one other sentiment of large mark and consequence which pervades the poetry of Burns no less conspicuously than the sentiment of Scottish nationality, and which it was in fact one of the special achievements of his genius to interlink therewith permanently and indissolubly in the future regards of mankind. It is the sentiment of personal manliness and independence, of the intrinsic spiritual co-equality of all honest human beings, despite their differences of rank and condition. The sentiment had been expressed by others before Burns; but he made it his own, and re-issued it as no mere revolutionary speculation, but the sterling result of his own experience. Born and bred a Scottish peasant himself, knowing the Scottish peasantry thoroughly, and in avowed sympathy all his life with them and with their fellow-myriads whose manual toil upholds the "glittering show" of modern society, he proclaimed, as had never been proclaimed in verse before, the essential human worth that might exist, and did exist, in conjunction with poverty and its extremest hardships, but never ceased, while conveying that message as sternly as he could to those in high places, who seemed to require the information most, to inculcate at the same time on the toiling myriads themselves the doctrine of individual

self-respect, personal integrity at all hazards and to the last gasp, and mutual compassion and helpfulness. If quotations in support of this sentiment of individual manliness are wanted, where are they to be found in such number and variety as in the poetry of Burns? But he was not content that the sentiment should be thus diffused or dispersed through his poetry. As was his fashion, he gathered up and generalised this sentiment also in one immortal lyric:—

“Is there for honest poverty  
That hangs his head, and a’ that?  
The coward slave, we pass him by:  
We daur be poor for a’ that!  
For a’ that and a’ that,  
Our toils obscure and a’ that,  
The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,  
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.

“What though on hamely fare we dine,  
Wear hodden grey, and a’ that?  
Gie fools their silks and knaves their wine,  
A man’s a man for a’ that.  
For a’ that and a’ that,  
Their tinsel show and a’ that,  
The honest man, though e’er so poor,  
Is king o’ men for a’ that.”

It is not for nothing that this lyric, some diluted version of which is now in the poetical repertory of all the European nations, came forth in the Scottish tongue. It may be questioned indeed how far Burns found the sentiment which it expresses Scottish already, and how far he only desired that it should be made Scottish and determined to make it Scottish. Either way, and mainly through Burns, it *is* Scottish now. If manliness is now a reputed Scottish characteristic all the world over, if it is now more disgraceful for a Scotsman than for a native of any other land to be found begging, if the servile and “booming” Scotsman of the older English satirical literature is now on the point of becoming notoriously an extinct animal, to what is this owing so much as to the fame abroad, and the influence within Scotland itself, of Burns’s most sonorous and most impassioned lyric? Burns was once in Aberdeen. It was in September, 1787, when he was in the twenty-ninth year of his age, and in the first flush of his celebrity. He had been on a tour from Edinburgh northwards as far as to Strathbogie and Inverness, and was taking Aberdeen

on his way back. He saw with interest two or three of the then notabilities of the town, and was especially pleased at meeting with young Bishop Skinner, the son of the author of “Tullochgorum;” but the place itself does not seem to have impressed him favourably. “Aberdeen a lazy town,” is the jotting in his diary, as he left it to pass into Kincardineshire and the south. They do not call Aberdeen a lazy town now, nor the Aberdonians a lazy people. They say rather that they are a preternaturally hard headed people, preternaturally cool and cautious, and preternaturally prosaic. “*They say: Quhat say they? Lat them say.*” Hard-headed! Is soft-headedness a virtue? Cool and cautious! That is what is said out of Scotland about the Scots generally; and inasmuch as the whole history of Scotland contradicts it, and proves that the Scots are a singularly perfervid and tempestuous race, may not any ultra-Scottish degree of coolness and caution, supposed to be discernible among the Aberdonians, consist merely in a power which the Aberdonians have of refraining from showing how fervid and tempestuous they can be till the last possible moment? Prosaic! Who was the earliest of known Scottish poets, the very father and beginner of North British Literature, but John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen; is there not a large volume of collected biographies of “The Bards of Bon Accord;” and do I not myself remember, as the very type of poetical and musical enthusiasm incarnate, that citizen of Aberdeen, by occupation a tea-dealer, with whom, on several successive nights, about fifty years ago, I walked up and down your lamp-lit and star-lit Union Street long after the clocks had struck twelve, listening to his quotations from Keats, and his ecstasies over the luscious beauties and subtleties of that English poet? Whether prosaic or not ourselves, we are now paying our tribute to the memory of the man whom we agree with all the rest of Scotland in regarding as our national Scottish poet. In the business of commemoration, as in that of the adjective, there are three degrees. The positive is the print or engraving after an accredited picture; the comparative is a bust; the superlative is a statue. In the present instance the Aberdonians have reached the

superlative, and have been satisfied with nothing less. In this, their Granite City, on that north-eastern shore of Scotland which shoulders on the roar of the German Ocean, and is almost the diagonally opposite district of Scotland to that softer south-west where Burns was born and where he lived, they have set up a statue of Burns because they, too, are proud of him; and they have taken care that the statue should be no casual importation, but a specimen of the best work of their foremost Aberdonian sculptor. There it stands in the centre of our city; and, long years hence, after all of us are gone, Aberdonians, old and young, will be passing and repassing it, glancing at it as they pass, and muttering to themselves, as we do now, the magical name of Robert Burns—(prolonged cheers).

Lord Provost STEWART then said—The uppermost thought in my mind at present is how very difficult it must have been for you to sustain your interest—(“No, no”)—and for Professor Masson to have felt in sympathy with such a large audience, because it is quite impossible that more than a tenth part—barely that—could have heard what he had been saying. But I can assure you that I am perfectly certain of this, and all who have heard him will agree with me when I say that he has delivered one of the most interesting, beautiful, and exquisite addresses regarding Burns—(cheers)—that could possibly have been delivered to us, and I feel, also, certain that when he sees it himself tomorrow in the newspapers, along with us, the

Professor of Literature in Edinburgh University will be pleased with his own production. I am perfectly certain that every one of you will be highly delighted with it—(cheers). Well, I have only to thank him for coming here so kindly, and by that address dedicating this monument to the adornment and embellishment of this city. But my special mission to-day is to thank Bailie Mearns, Dr. Alexander, Mr. Davidson, and all the gentlemen who composed the committee, and who have got up that statue for you; and I am sure that in your name I may return your heartfelt thanks to the committee for the great exertions they have made in collecting money for the statue. It is a statue of which the city will always be proud, and if we have been proud of “Robbie” in the past, we will be still prouder that we have set up a monument like that to his memory—(cheers). I shall only add that the committee have done their work so well that we would like them not to discharge themselves, but to continue in office until they gave us another of Scott—(cheers)—and Chalmers—(cheers)—and of any other national great men that we should commemorate the memory of—(cheers). And I may tell you I do think that Aberdeen is wanting in that respect, and not for want of sentiment either, for I believe we are of all Scots the most fervid—(hear, hear, and cheers). In the name of this large multitude, I beg to return the very best and most hearty thanks of the community to Bailie Mearns and the rest of the committee.

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## VI.—HOW BURNS WROTE.

“I COMPOSE hastily,” said Burns, chatting about his poems with Cromek, “but correct laboriously;” and that sentence condenses all we know of the poet’s habits of thought. A trifle set him off, as it did Byron and Wordsworth,—a broken daisy lying in the furrow of his plough, a mouse turned out of its “wee bit housie all in ruin.” The picture of a man asking for work, the recollection of an old ballad, a line of Ramsay or Ferguson, or the contemplation of a scene of family worship in the cottage of a peasant. And when the idea

had once sunk in his mind he brooded over it till it took form and shape in a poetic creation. This generally is the history of his poems. His “Address to the Deil,” for instance, was suggested, Gilbert tells us, by “running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of this august personage.” Reading Ferguson’s “Farmer’s Ingle,” and contemplating the scenes of domestic worship which constitute one of the most characteristic incidents of the cottage life of



Scotland, suggested the "Cottar's Saturday Night." Robert had frequently remarked to him, says Gilbert, "that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase 'Let us worship God,' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship." And one Sunday afternoon, when they happened to be walking together, Robert electrified his brother by the recitation of the "Cottar's Saturday Night." Those exquisitely beautiful idyls upon the mountain daisy and the field-mouse are the inspiration of the moment. The dew is still upon them. His gaudeman had, sixty years afterward, a distinct recollection of the poet turning up the mouse. The plough-boy ran after the creature to kill it, but was checked and recalled by his master, who, he observed, thereafter became thoughtful and abstracted. Burns, like the poet of Rydal Mount, held that no poet ever found the muse,

"Till by himself he learned to wander  
Adown some trotting burn's meander,  
And no think lang."

Burns rarely committed his verses to paper till they had been thoroughly conned over in his own mind. "Holding the plough," Gilbert says, "was a favourite situation with Robert: for poetic composition, and some of

his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise." But we know, too, from his own confession, how sweet he thought it in the gloaming,

"To stray and pensive ponder  
A heartfelt song."

He composed generally like Wordsworth, without any regular plan. A thought struck him, and if turning over this thought he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he then cast about for proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often the part to be first produced. But knowing what we do of his conversational powers, and of the terseness, fluency, and felicity of his poetic diction, we should assume for ourselves, without the authority of his "Epistle to Davie," that Burns was rarely at a loss for apt and picturesque expression to clothe his thoughts when his muse was "once fairly het." He frequently had half a dozen or more pieces of one sort and another on hand; a satire, a song, or a pastoral poem, which he took up in turn according to the momentary impulse of his mind, dismissing the work when it bordered on fatigue.

## VII.—MR. WILLIAM WALLACE ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Bridgeton Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.*

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IN the course of his preliminary remarks, Mr. Wallace alluded to advices which had recently been offered by certain men of letters to the annual purveyors of the so-called "oratory of the 25th." Maintaining that these advices and that oratory demonstrated the ever-increasing popularity of Burns, he proceeded to say:—The attacks on "the oratory of the 25th" are increasing, because the enthusiasm which leads to that oratory is itself increasing. It takes almost innumerable forms—of fresh investigations into the details of Burns's life, of fresh theories of his poetry, of movements—most valuable movements—for the protection of lovers of his writings from the devices of manuscript forgers, of enormous additions to the lists of Burns

Clubs. We are confronted with the phenomenon—the most extraordinary literary phenomenon of our time—that this man, the centenary of whose death it will be our duty, alas! to celebrate three years and a half hence, is the object of a more widespread admiration, rising almost to worship, than any of his successors in the Three Kingdoms. Which is the reason—the natural and common-sense reason—for this phenomenon? And let us in trying to explain it remember the admirable advice which Lord Beaconsfield—himself, like Burns, a man of action as well as a man of letters—gave to the youth of Glasgow University. He recommended them to be men of their time. Let us, then, try to be men of our time in dealing with this

phenomenon; if we do, possibly the phenomenon will not appear so very mysterious after all. At all events I venture to think and to say that Burns's enormous and increasing popularity at the present time is due to two not unconnected causes—the fact that no one has superseded him as the poet of men of action, and the companion fact that in spirit, in the range of his subjects, even in style he is—I do not say greater—but more modern than any supremely popular Anglo-Saxon poet that has come after him. I have already alluded to Burns being the favourite poet with men of action belonging to all grades in the social scale; and need I say more than that he is so in virtue of his having given musical utterance to their loves, their dislikes, their hopes, their ambitions as no other man has yet done? They, like himself, cannot afford to be connoisseurs in life, in love, or in literature. They must take happiness as they find it, they must strike their ethics—nay, their religion in common life—painfully out of the circumstances in which they find themselves. They have tolerance for failings that lean to virtue's side, but nothing but absolute intolerance for cant, insincerity, unreality of all kinds. It is wonderful, therefore, that they should take to their hearts and keep there the poet who gave them the Odyssey of a sensible man's sensible love in the tenderness and humour of "Green grow the rushes, O;" who never assailed religion or churches, but never hesitated to expose the hypocrisy that sometimes takes the place of the one, or ridicule the fools, fanatics, and pharisees that are still sometimes to be found in the other; who gave a practical turn to the preaching of the vague but fascinating doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man and the universal sisterhood of women by telling us to "gently scan our brother man, still gentler sister woman," who above all things supplied the business man with a *vade mecum* in—

"Gather gear by ev'ry wile  
That's justified by honour,  
Not for to hide it in a hedge,  
Nor for a train attendant,  
But for the glorious privilege  
Of being independent!"

In dwelling for a moment on the marvellous

modernness of Burns I am not prepared to discuss the question whether, viewed simply as a poet, he is the inferior or superior of his brilliant half-brothers—in revolt against conventionality—Byron and Shelley—much less of Wordsworth or Tennyson, who, although their lives were cast in quieter places than his, understood him thoroughly and loved him tenderly, yet not more tenderly than the simple great ones gone from the United States within living memory—Longfellow and Whittier and Whitman. All that I have to contend for is that Burns was different from his successors, that he touches more closely the realities of common present-day life than they have done, and that in virtue of his doing so his name evokes more general enthusiasm. Take even the apparently small but important and significant matter of style. These are days of hurry, when we have to come to rapid decisions and to express them in pithy language. Literature, if it is to keep itself abreast of the life of the country, must tend to partake more and more of the character of good talk. A direct speaking style is therefore the style of the future, if not of the present. And which of the moderns—for even Tennyson himself gets lost in wandering mazes of metaphysics—has so much of this direct speech as Burns? "There was never a man of letters," says our distinguished fellow-countryman, Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, "with more absolute command of his means, and we may say of him without excess that his style was his slave." Of this I could give a thousand illustrations—nay, every line I have already quoted is an illustration. But I may give one quotation which not only illustrates Burns's style, but gives expression to a sentiment that is what he himself termed and would have a competent part of his nature.

"Here's freedom to him that wad read,  
Here's freedom to him that wad write:  
There's nane ever feared that the truth should be  
heard  
But them wham the truth would indite."

In these four lines have we not the heart and soul of Milton's "Areopagitica"—perhaps the most daring, dignified, and eloquent piece of argumentation to be found in the whole of the English language? Burns's



direct speaking style is but one evidence of his modernness. Endowed, as I have already said, with the instincts of the man of action, no less than with the instincts of the poet, he threw himself—he could not help throwing himself—into the ecclesiastical and political struggles of his time. He fought the battles of the Moderates. He wrote election ballads. He ate of the forbidden fruit of the French Tree of Liberty. But, being a poet, he saw far beyond the conflicts of his time. He dipped into the future, far as human eye could see. He went straight to the root of every question that he argued; he was never content with skirmishes and affairs of outposts; he must needs make an assault on the citadel. This is certainly not the time or the place to say whether Burns was right or wrong either in his views on the subjects of controversy of which he wrote, or in his forecasts of the political and social future. But I am simply stating historical facts when I affirm that not only was he the pioneer of what for good or evil are styled political and theological Liberalism in Scotland, but that neither the one nor the other has yet found a poetical exponent to supplant him. Then as our trans-Atlantic cousins have admitted, with their wonted heartiness, Democracy, with all its possibilities, perhaps with all its dangers, has not yet got beyond “A man’s a man for a’ that.” And if ever that extension of the modern Gospel of Humanitarianism, whose goal is at present the greatest good of the greatest number of sentient beings, and which has already taken practical shape in Acts for the protection of wild birds and elaborate steps for the prevention of cruelty to animals, safely runs the fire of the ridicule that is the fate of “tenderness over drowning flies,” and reaches the entrenchment of public recognition, whom can it claim as its pioneer and popular poet so truly as the coadjutor of Cowper, the anticipator of Wordsworth, the sensitive heart that despaired with the field-mouse, responded to the terror of the wild-fowl of Loch Turit, limped in all but rhythm with the wounded hare, wept for poor Mailie, and yet smiled amid his tears?

Mr. Wallace, alluding to the present “Highland Mary” controversy, said—The admirers of Burns are not perhaps so ignorant as the

“investigators” think. In regard to this, as to all matters relating to Burns, the golden rule is—Be strong and of good courage. If—and on this point I do not speak altogether without knowledge—any discoverer of any mare’s nest comes forward with the particulars of his find, he will probably discover the admirers of the poet—ay, and the champions of Mary, dear departed, but never to be dishonoured, shade—waiting with equanimity for them and for him. In the course of his subsequent remarks, Mr. Wallace made a reference to the proposed new biography of Burns. He said—Allow me with all due diffidence to make a suggestion. What was Burns doing a hundred years ago, and throughout the last period of his life? He was at once a poet, a patriot, and a practical man, and during his closing years he showed himself to be all three by throwing his labour, without fee or reward, into the great and successful enterprise of consolidating and purifying our national songs. I ask then in one word, cannot we—cannot the Burns Clubs throughout the world—show in turn their gratitude to our national benefactor in a practical fashion by consolidating and purifying Burns biography? Many biographers he has had, everyone of them well-intentioned, many of them painstaking men. But all have been proved to be fallible. Besides, now that we know that the forger has been abroad, what guarantee have we that certain writings, more especially certain letters, which have been attributed to Burns are genuine? Cannot, I say, the Burns Clubs of Scotland organise some committee which would prepare an edition of the authentic works of Burns and a biography, which would not of necessity be long, but would of necessity be final, because it would be based on verified facts? One sees in these days hints thrown out to the effect that the next Exhibition with which this great centre of Scottish life and energy should be identified with ought to be one of Burns manuscripts, relics, and memorabilia generally. That would be a good thing. I have also heard hints of a great National exhibition on similar lines. That would be still better. But even if nothing happens to stimulate our love of Burns, I trust that the three years and a half

which still stand between us and the centenary of Burns's death may be well spent in the preparation of a literary memorial worthy even of him.

In conclusion, Mr. Wallace referred to the action, severely animadverted on by the late Principal Shairp, of certain craniologists who, in 1834, when the mausoleum at Dumfries was opened to admit the remains of the poet's widow, committed the "inhuman outrage" of trying their hats on his skull, to find them "all too little." Not a few critics of Burns's life, and even of his works, he said, have been less reverential and much less candid than the Dumfries craniologists. They seem bent far less on showing his own position in life and literature than in proving that in regard to some particular "bump" his head is not so much developed as this, that, or the other poet's. But this much must be said even for the critics, that such is the position of Burns—the interpenetration of his life and works, his unity in duality—that it is almost impossible to read him at all without unconsciously trying one's hat on his head. No individual critic has yet dared to say that his hat exactly fits that head; no critic will ever dare to say so. For it is the test of a Titan that "the great soul of the world" alone can be both just and generous to him. Finally, and above all things, Burns is and ever will be the special possession of the often mute and inglorious, but often also large-headed, men of action, who may on one side be what

Carlyle terms "mostly fools," but are yet mostly generous, mostly struggling onward and upward, even, it may be, with no clearer rule of conduct than—

"Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die."

To them Burns has given hope, stimulus, musical utterance, a ready reckoner in ethics, a glass in which they may see themselves almost, if not altogether, as others see them. They will not try their own hats on Burns's skull; they have neither time nor inclination to do anything of the kind. They "possess" Burns; he is always with them, like the poor, for whom he has done so much; and it is not criticism, but love, that begins at home. Yet the history of the 96 years that have passed since he died shows that they may very safely be trusted not to allow any really inhuman outrage to be perpetrated on his memory. It is not difficult, indeed, to predict the treatment that will be accorded to its perpetrators—

"By Heavens! the sacrilegious dogs  
Shall fuel be to boil"

the kettle of Scotland's love of Burns! The future may be left to take thought of its duties, and to raise Burns to an even loftier position than he has yet occupied. Confident of that future, therefore, I ask you to drink in solemn silence, but with a full cup and a fuller heart, to the evergreen poet and prophet of Nature and Humanity.

### VIII.—LINES

Read at the Boston Celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

How sweetly came the holy psalms  
From Saints and Martyrs down.  
The waving of triumphal palms  
Above the thorny crown.  
The choral praise, the chanted prayers  
From harps by angels strung,  
The hunted Cameron's mountain airs,  
The hymns that Luther sung!

Yet, jarring not the heavenly notes,  
The sounds of earth are heard,  
As through the open minster floats  
The song of praise and bird!

Not less the wonder of the sky  
That daisies bloom below;  
The brook sings on, though loud and high  
The cloudy organs blow!

And if the tender ear he jarred  
That, haply, hears by turns  
The saintly harp of Olney's bard,  
The pastoral pipe of Burns.  
No discord mars his perfect plan  
Who gave them both a tongue;  
For he who sings the love of man  
The love of God hath sung!

To-day be every fault forgiven  
 Of him in whom we joy !  
 We take, with thanks, the gold of Heaven  
 And leave the earth's alloy.  
 Be ours his music as of spring,  
 His sweetness as of flowers,  
 The songs the bard himself might sing  
 In holier ears than ours.

Sweet airs of love and home, the hum  
 Of household melodies,  
 Come singing as the robins come  
 To sing in door-yard trees.  
 And, heart to heart, two nations lean,  
 No rival wreaths to twine,  
 But blending in eternal green  
 The holly and the pine !

## IX.—BURNS THROUGH FRENCH SPECTACLES.

FROM *THE WEEKLY SCOTSMAN*, February 25th, 1893.

SCOTSMEN will read, or at least hear of, with peculiar interest, a French estimate of Robert Burns, contained in a work by Auguste Angellier, published by Hachette & Cie., Paris. The title of the book is "Robert Burns: His Life and Works," and consists of two large octavo volumes, each containing some five hundred pages. The first of these is devoted to the life of the poet, and the second to a criticism of his writings. The story of Burns' life is told in great detail, and with considerable dramatic power. It is not a mere compilation from English biographies, but is the result of a thorough study of the original authorities. Speaking of the condition of education in Scotland in the end of the century, the author says:—"That which made Scotland what she has been, that which brought forth from her sparse population a considerable number of illustrious men, an incalculable number of distinguished men, was her system of primary education. She had organised that universal education which our age believes that it has invented. In every parish the poor could be educated. It was meagre teaching no doubt, often given in a mere shed by ignorant men. But what did that matter? The people had that thirst for knowledge which in prompting energy and activity of life is 'worth more, worth a thousand times more, than the possession and the satiety of knowledge. Masters taught and pupils learnt as best they could; and goodwill counts for much in everything. In almost every cottage, by the light of a peat fire, for they hardly ever burnt coal in those days, and the Scotch hills are mostly covered with brushwood, they read eagerly, they handed on to each other the few books that

they possessed, often books of theology or collections of sermons; they discussed the orthodoxy and the doctrine of their minister, sometimes with native eloquence or perspicuity, always with that tenacity in argument which is characteristic of the race. Whilst the towns in other countries were still in the lowest depth of stagnant ignorance, the traveller passing through the most miserable Scotch clachan was surprised to find germs and sometimes wonderfully full-blown flowers of intellectual life."

In his treatment of Burns's character M. Angellier is prepared to make excuses for him, but he will not in his interest relax the fundamental principles of morality. Speaking of the spirit in which he has approached the problem, he says:—"I may perhaps be told that I have been too lenient, that I have too often found excuses for a life full of shortcomings. I would answer that I have not been lenient as regards facts; I have extenuated nothing; I have concealed nothing. Some facts there are of which no one had seen the bearing, and I have pointed it out; so that the poet's admirers may reproach me for being hard on him, and for letting the sun shine in certain corners which might have been allowed to remain dark. Nor have I been lenient in interpreting his acts of weakness and selfishness. I believe I have given to each of them its proper moral value as measured by the sufferings of which it was the cause. Leniency only appears in my general estimate of the man, in noting the good there was in him, his qualities, his efforts, the circumstances of his life, and the impulses of a nature which was part of his genius. Here am I lenient, though leniency



is but justice. I am not a judge that I should condemn a creature like myself. I am not infallible, nor is the cruel duty imposed upon me ; I speak with pity and precaution on the obvious failings of a fellow-creature, of a great fellow-creature, whose whole life I do not know, whose sufferings I cannot feel, whose motives I cannot measure, whose regrets I have not weighed, and of whom I only touch the rough bark which the actions form round the intentions of the soul."

As to the element of passion in his nature, M. Angellier says:—"Some of his biographers represent him as being led by his senses, and explain his faults as a conflict between spiritual gifts and a carnal and worldly constitution. It is hard to tell what poet's love is made of. There was certainly something else than passion in Burns's love, for there was poetry and light-heartedness in the adventures which were most fatal to his life, and which are the darkest blots on his name. He was, above all, violent and excessive in everything. His anger was terrible. That force took him by fits and starts, outstripped his reflection, and preceded his remorse. But this merit is due to him : he was always frank—a quality which even his enemies recognised in him, and which was also recognised by those of his biographers who are least disposed to be lenient. To moderate and direct his violence, he would have needed some discipline. He was entirely devoid of it ; he had neither the training nor the will ; he was constantly the toy of his passions. He never once turned on them to face them. He never had any consolidation of character. He had, in short, a receptive temperament, with very energetic reactions. His heart was a crossway, where winds from every quarter had passed, had met, and had struggled. The line of his life is the broken trace of a succession of chances and accidents. The unequalled vivacity of actual sensation, which is the great quality of his literary productions, was the great vice in his character. He was seized, he was irresistibly allured by it. Emotion came upon him and carried him away. He always belonged to the present, with no cares for the future, and sometimes without sufficient recollection of the past. Hence these moments where it seems as though he forgot too easily, and

those sudden reactions, which have a look of ingratitude, as, for instance, in his verses against Mrs. Riddell. Even his generosity was either spontaneous or on impulse. Prolonged and reflective generosity of sacrifice he had not. It can hardly be said to be apparent even in his marriage to Jean Armour, for that was an act so sudden that it might be called an impulse ; though now we know that it lasted. He was like a tree which sheds its leaves at every gust, making whirlwinds for itself in which it is lost, and which hide the sky from it."

The main flaw in his character was his egoism, though it was a generous egoism. He could not forget himself or subordinate his own interest to those of others. There was no common measure between them. This weakness was the cause of that which weighs most heavily upon his memory—the suffering which he inflicted upon others.

After speaking of the want of continuity and set purpose in his life and work, M. Angellier thus concludes his estimate:—"Nevertheless, that is not sufficient justice. He requires more. Weigh his defects, his faults, as heavily as you like, the scale where the pure gold is, easily turns the balance. Admiration increases as we examine his qualities. When one thinks of his sincerity, his uprightness, his kindness towards people and animals, his contempt for anything base, his hatred of any trickery—which in itself would be an honour—his disinterestedness, the many beautiful impulses that form his heart, the high inspirations of his mind, the intensity, the idealism which was necessary to him to keep his soul above his fate ; when one thinks that he felt all these generous feelings so intensely that they formed part of his intellectual life, that they came from him as jewels, so keenly did he feel them, so like was his soul to a furnace where precious metals were molten, that it might be said he was one of nature's noblemen, and of great goodness. When it is remembered how much he suffered, how much he overcame, and how much he accomplished, with what misery his genius had to fight to be born and to live, the perseverance of his years of apprenticeship, his intellectual exploits, and after all, his glory ; one says to oneself that what he did

not succeed in, or what he did not undertake, was as nothing compared to what he achieved, and that he was a man who accomplished much. And what remains to be said except that the clay of which he was made was full of diamonds, and that his life was one of the most valiant and the proudest that any poet ever lived?"

In another part of the book M. Angellier treats of Burns as the poet of love, analysing its influence upon him, and his treatment of its various aspects, its pleasures and its pains. He thus sums up Burns's attitude :—"Without doubt, love, as it has been sung by Burns, is, on the whole, neither very deep nor very lofty. It is not a love which illuminated the heart which bore it, and lighted hearts in the future with a new ideal of tenderness, very sweet or very brilliant. We must not look for the chaste constancy of Petrarch, the symbolic adoration of Dante, or the burning and refined passion of Shakespeare. And—to borrow other names from our own time so preoccupied with the ruling passion—we do not find the prostrate admiration of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the painful exaltation of Musset, or the ironical and heroical tortures of Henri Heine. These are the highest forms of love, of which up till the present time the human heart has given examples; and the works which preserve them, whether they sparkle with the glimmer of an opal like Petrarch's sonnets, or with the fire of rubies like Shakespeare's, are lights on the road to heaven. The love of Burns cannot be reckoned among these. He wants an ideal element, something more of chastity, an aspiration to higher things, the effort to become more worthy of the loved one, the feeling that she is all that is pure, and that the heart she dwells in must be purified for her; or the modern feeling of a common progress—the joy of aiding each other in climbing the hill of life. He also wants that which is the laurel on the brow of love—devotion, the annihilation and the gift of self. He remains personal, egotistical. There is an almost hateful 'I'

which always betrays itself. He knew not the sublime generosity of love; he did not freely give himself up. Whatever be the worth of a human soul, it adds to it by self-abrogation, and the heart has never attained to its fullest value until it has denied itself. That which gives incomparable beauty to the sonnets of Elizabeth Barrett Browning is the way she forgets self before the one she loves, the way that she pours out her life at his feet like a sweet ointment. The fixed personality of Burns is in the other extreme: that supreme munificence was denied him. On the other hand, to be reckoned among ardent lovers he lacks concentration and continuity. He is disseminated, scattered, belonging to no one. Obligated to begin from the beginning each time, he continually came back to the starting point, and never passed the term of novelty. His love has always the vivacity, but also all the rather superficial agitation of a first attack. He has never been to the end; he knew not the succeeding stages: the calm possession, the serenity, or the harmonious marriage of two lives."

In a thoughtful chapter on the poet's tenderness for animals, he says :—"Burns draws animals as they are, with their innocent ways; free from all artfulness, and with that ignorance of their faults which makes them pardonable like those of children. Their soul never develops out of a state of confused childhood. Burns loves them so, quite frankly; not as the curious moralist who finds amusement in them, but as a man who makes use of them, who appreciates their obedience, their patience at work, their good qualities, and who is thankful to them for their assistance. There is not in his whole works a passage in which he speaks of them in harshness or anger. The bitterness which he sometimes felt towards men never enters into his relations to animals. His manner of speaking to them is marked by affection and humour, and he never better succeeds in mixing tenderness with a little bantering fun than when he is speaking to them."



## X.—BY BONNIE DOON.

*A Reminiscence BY JAMES COGHILL.*

I STAND upon a lofty Arran hill :  
 Behind me lie wild moors of heath-clad  
 peat :  
 Before, the blue expanse of waters still,  
 Which oft, when tempest-toss'd, have raved  
 and beat

Wildly along thy shores, oh, island fair—  
 Thou brightest gem that decks old Clutha's  
 firth—  
 And, as I stand, I gaze towards Auld Ayr,  
 Musing of him to whom fair Kyle gave  
 birth.

The Auld Clay biggin' once again I see,  
 As when I stood upon its hallowed floor :  
 This was the birth-place—*this*, oh, Burns—  
 of *thee*,

Whom peer and peasant equally adore !  
 There stands the bed which, on thy natal  
 morn,  
 Gave to our land her laurel'd King of Song :  
 Here sat the gossip who, when thou wast born,  
 Proclaimed that Coila's fame thou should'st  
 prolong !

Methinks I see thee on the gossip's knee,  
 Thy infant gaze fixed, wondering, on her  
 face,

As, keekin' in thy loof, she fondles thee,  
 The while those scores and lines she seeks  
 to trace :

Thank heav'n she ne'er foresaw thy mourn-  
 ful fate,

As she foretold thy ranting, youthful years—  
 Had she portrayed thee dire misfortune's  
 mate,

Thy infant laughter might have turn'd to  
 tears !

I seem to rove once more by Bonnie Doon,  
 I seem to see the rose and woodbine twine :  
 The little birds their warblings sweetly tune,  
 Calling to mind thy lyric pathos fine.

Hark ! On my ear in harmony complete  
 The voices fall of youths and maidens fair—  
 Yes, 'tis that song of thine, so soft and sweet,  
 Borne from Doon Brig upon the summer  
 air !

I seem to stand again beside the spot  
 Where lie the ashes of thy parents dear—  
 Meet is it all who mourn the poet's lot  
 Should o'er these ashes shed a reverent  
 tear :

The dust of her who bore thee to that sire  
 Whom thou reveréd'st as the best of men,  
 And his, to all who love thy matchless lyre,  
 Should sacred be, ev'n as yon but-an'-ben !

Shall memory quit these scenes by classic  
 Doon

Unmindful of Tam's flight from yon witch-  
 gang ?

Of Alloway's haunted kirk's grim piper loon ?  
 Of Cutty Sark, the "soople jade an'  
 strang" ?

No, no : immortal as thy sweetest song  
 Must aye remain that gallop in the dark,  
 When Tam on Maggie sped by Doon along  
 To flee the legion led by Cutty Sark !

\* \* \* \*

But I must quit this lofty Arran hill,  
 Ere falls the gloaming on the heath-clad  
 moor :

Good Night, thou blue expanse of waters  
 still—

Auld Ayr, no longer I behold thy shore !  
 Good Night, Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie  
 Doon !

Good Night, thou Auld Clay biggin' of the  
 Bard !

May I these scenes revisit oft, and soon,  
 Which claim my heart's most reverent  
 regard !

## XI.—BURNS IN FRENCH.

FROM THE *NEW YORK SUN*, MARCH 19TH, 1893.

A LITERARY *tour de force*, if there ever was such a thing, has just been performed by M. Auguste Angellier in his translation of Robert Burns's poems into French. Of course, the complete accomplishment of the thing is impossible, but Mr. Angellier's near approach to it is surprising in the extreme. Naturally enough, portions of the translations are laughable, and if Burns could read them now as they appear in the diplomatic language, with all the violent twists which the translator is obliged to give to that flexible tongue in his effort to follow the poet foot by foot, he might feel that there was at last a full and favourable response to his often quoted wish:

"O, wad some power the giftie gi'e us  
To see oursel's as ithers see us!"

Who ever thought of seeing "Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut" in French? But here it is sure enough in Parisian fashion:

"O! Willie a brassé un demi-boisson de malt,  
Et Rob et Allan vinrent le goûter;  
Pendant toute cette nuit, trois cœurs plus joyeux  
Vous ne les auriez pas trouvés dans le chrétienté.

"Nous n'étions pas très gris, nous n'étions pas très gris,  
Nous avions juste une petite goutte dans l'œil.  
Le coq peut chanter, le jour peut se montrer,  
Toujours nous goutons la liqueur d'orge."

Here is the original:

"Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,  
And Rob and Allan cam to pree;  
Three blither hearts that lee-lang nicht  
Ye wadna find in Christendie.

"We are na fou, we're na that fou,  
But just a drappie in our e'e;  
The cock may crawl, the day may daw,  
And ay we'll taste the barley bree."

For the benefit of the uninitiated we will here translate the translator's effort:

"O, Willie has brewed a peck of malt,  
And Rob and Allan came to sample it;  
During all that night three hearts more joyous  
You would not have found them in Christianity.

"We were not very drunk, we were not very drunk,  
We had just a little drop in the eye;

The cock can sing, the day show itself,  
Still we taste the liquor of barley."

But perhaps the funniest of all is the French version of the "Address to the De'il." Here is a portion of the original:

"But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben I  
O wad ye tak a thought and men' I  
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a stake—  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
Ev'n for your sake?"

And this is the way M. Angellier renders it:

"Allons, bonsoir vieux Nick,  
Je désire que tu réfléchisses et que tu t'amendes.  
Tu pourrais peut-être, je n'en sals rien,  
Avoir encore une chance;  
Cela me fait chagrin de penser à ce trou  
Même pour toi."

As the *Pall Mall Gazette* aptly puts it, the "*Allons, bonsoir vieux Nick*" reminds one of the Frenchman who translated "All Hail, Macbeth!" by the immortal words, "Bonjour, Monsieur Macbeth!" But let us admire M. Angellier's "Address to the De'il," stripped of its French costume and standing in the Anglo-Saxon bareness:

"Let us go, good evening, old Nick,  
I wish that you might reflect and mend yourself.  
You might perhaps, I know nothing about it,  
Have again a chance;  
It grieves me to think of that hole  
Even for you."

From "Tam o' Shanter" this is the portion of the translation which is criticised mercilessly on the other side of the Atlantic:

"Quand les colporteurs quittent la rue  
Et que les voisins altérés rencontrent les voisins;  
Comme les jours de marché tirent sur le tard,  
Et que les gens commencent à reprendre la route!  
Quand nous sommes assis à boire l'ale  
En train de devenir gris et parfaitement heureux.  
Nous oublions les longs milles écossais,  
Les marais, les ruisseaux, les satoirs, les barrières  
Qui sont entre nous et la maison  
Où est assise morose et mauvaise notre dame  
Rassemblant ses sourcils comme un orage s'amasse,  
Et soignant sa colère pour la tenir chaude."

Here is the original :

“ When chapman billies leave the street,  
When drouthy neebors, neebors meet,  
As market days are wearing late,  
And folk begin to tak’ the gate ;  
While we sit bousing at the nappy  
An’ getting fou and unco happy.

“ We think na on the lang Scots miles,  
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,  
That lie between us and our hame,  
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,  
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,  
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.”

All things considered, this translation is not so awfully bad. In fact, it is about as good as any man could make it ; and the critics might profit by the lesson contained in the saucy remark of the young coloured gentleman to his mother-in-law. He was practising on the fiddle, and he played “ John Brown’s Body ” as well as he could, but the instrument was out of tune. “ You played that horribly, John,” said the old woman. “ You wouldn’t play it better yourself,” retorted John. And she had nothing more to say.

## XII.—BURNS IN BOHEMIA.\*

THERE has just been issued from a Prague publishing house a little octavo volume of 188 pages, containing about 200 of the songs and ballads of Burns, translated into Cech by Professor Sladek, a distinguished Bohemian patriot, poet, scholar, and journalist, whose work we noticed some time ago in connection with Signor Ulisse Ortensi’s Italian translation. Having been favoured with an advance copy of the work, a few words regarding the book and its author cannot fail to prove interesting to our readers of the Burns persuasion.

The work is published under the auspices of the Royal Academy of Science and Letters of Bohemia, and forms volume twelve of a series of translations representing the works of the greatest poets of the Italic, Teutonic, and Slavonic races. The list of the Academy’s publications contains Burns and Mickiewicz, by Professor Sladek ; Ariosto, Alfieri, Calderon, Shelley, Byron, etc., by other scholars. It is expected that the present volume of Burns translations will be followed by another, and that the two instalments will be of such a nature as to convey to the Bohemian people a fairly adequate notion of our Scottish minstrel. In this way the Bohemian Academy is doing precisely the same good work as has been done by the Berlin Society of Foreign Literature, to whom Goethe dedicated the German translation of Carlyle’s “ Life of Schiller,” in the introduction

to which the German poet translated a large part of Carlyle’s magnificent essay on Burns.

We must congratulate the Ceske Akademie on being so fortunate in their choice of a translator for Burns. Professor Sladek is a linguist and philologist of wide range and accomplishments. He has served a long apprenticeship as a translator of English poetry, besides being one of the foremost of living Bohemian lyrical poets. A man does not execute translations from Longfellow, Shakespeare, Byron, Keats, Coleridge, Hood, Tennyson, Dante, Gosse, Dobson, and others without learning many things of the utmost importance to him in the mere technique of the art of poetry.

These qualifications, joined to a rare appreciation of Scottish literature, singled out Professor Sladek as the man *par excellence* who could do justice to the compositions of our national poet, and these expectations have been more than realised ; and we only regret that it is impossible to convey to the reader, unless he is conversant with Cech, a proper idea of how well the translator has done his work.

In some half-a-dozen pages M. Sladek gives the chief events in the life of Burns, and we have to say of it that it is the only life of the poet written by a foreigner that does not contain errors in fact and chronology. Some French and German translations are most tantalising in these respects.

\* Robert Burns : Vybor Z. Pisni : a Ballad. Prelozil, Josef V. Sladek, Praze, 1892.

The closing paragraph of his introduction contains this reference to two English authors:—

“Za pratelskonj pomoc, ktere se mi ochotne dostalo z Anglie od basnika Ed. W. Gosse a vydavatele “Burnsovy Kroniky” pana Johna Muira z Kilmarnocku, vydavam vrele diky.”

We referred to Professor Sladek's training as a translator, and his intimate knowledge of the technique of English poetry. The book before us is a remarkable proof of his abilities. In every case he has retained the peculiar and difficult rhymes of Burns. No matter how difficult the stanza may be to manipulate, or the words selected as rhymes, he has overcome every obstacle. We quote a few lines of his rendering of the passage in “Tam o' Shanter” describing the orgies of the witches' Sabbath:—

Jeeminku Jene, smely reku !  
Inspiring, bold John Barleycorn !  
Jak chrabrost budis ve cloveku !  
What dangers thou canst make us scorn !  
Tvou cackou krev kdy vzilach mame,  
Wi' tippeny, we fear nae evil ;  
Ni z dabra si nie nedelame !  
Wi' usquabae, we'll face the devil !—  
Tak Tam, v nemz hra to vsemi sidly.  
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,  
Dnes byl by pral se se strasidly ;  
Fair play, he caredna deils a boddle, etc.

Tried by the standard of excellence attained by French and German translators, our author's work will bear favourable comparison. Let the first verse of “Scots wha hae” suffice in this respect:—In Cech—

Skoti, ktere Wallace ved ;  
Skoti, s nimiz Bruce sel v pred,  
Vitejte mi naposled  
V hrob, neb vitezstvi.

In German—

Schotten, die Wallace' Blut geweiht,  
Bruce so oft gefu'hr't zum Streit ;  
Grab sind Sieg, sie sind bereit,  
Auf deme, schlieszt die Reih !

In French—

Ecossais, qui avez saigné sous Wallace,  
Ecossais, qui Bruce a souvent conduits,  
Soyez les bienvenus à votre lit sanglant,  
Où à la victoire glorieuse.

The Frenchman has translated the word “glorious,” an expletive suggested by Thomson to suit the “stern hymn” to the tune “Lewis Gordon,” whereas Burns had written his song to fit the air, “Hey, tutti tatti.” The same translator, among a great number of similar errors, translates the four suppressed lines in “Tam o' Shanter.” We are glad to notice that Professor Sladek has not fallen into any of these errors. Indeed, his editorial work has been done admirably, because he has not been content to follow the translators who preceded him.

Now that Professor Sladek has given us the first translation of Burns into a Slavonic language, we hope to see other nations of the same family introducing the healthy and vigorous writings of our poet to the notice of their people.

In addition to the labours already mentioned, our author has published over a dozen volumes of poetry, some of which has been set to music by the best Bohemian composers. His latest book, “Ceske” Pisne (National Lyrics), is “Dedicated to John Muir, pioneer of Bohemia's cause in Scotland.”

### XIII.—THE ALDINE BURNS.\*

FROM *THE LITERARY WORLD*, June 16th, 1893.

THE three volumes of the new “Aldine” Burns are claimed to be “the most satisfactory edition yet published.” Mr. George A. Aitken, the editor, has done his work

with industry and excellent judgment. A full memoir prefaces the poems. Nothing new, at this time of day, can be said about Burns, but Mr. Aitken puts his facts freshly,

\* The Poetical Works of Robert Burns. Edited with a Memoir by George A. Aitken. In Three Volumes. (George Bell & Sons.) 2s. 6d. each volume.



and his remarks upon them and upon the poems commend themselves as judicious.

Burns's poetry faithfully reflects his life. Burns was human, and he was fond of jovial society, and in relation to woman his heart, as he confessed, "was tinder," but he was brave, honest, independent, and sympathised with all suffering. Mr. Aitken admits his hero's foibles, and is not disposed to claim, as some would do, that they are virtues; but he does show, and justifiably, that, looking at the man, looking at the time, and looking at the state of the agricultural people among whom he was brought up, too much has been made of the poet's youthful peccadilloes. Why should we, after all, be so eager to turn the lantern on to the specks that may have settled on men so sunlike as Burns, Shelley, and Carlyle? What baser ingratitude than to accept the rare gifts they bring us, and then to abuse the givers because they were personally mortals like ourselves?

Burns's place as a poet is unquestioned. He is the supreme popular songster of the world. Only Beranger comes within measurable distance of him. Through his poetry he has done much to mould the thought of our country. He has broadened its theology, quickened its social impulses, intensified the fervid nationalism of his country, of which Burns has become the real national saint; he has stimulated thousands to reach a higher ideal of character, and he has been the inspiration of the truest democracy. We quote Mr. Aitken's estimate of

#### BURNS AS A POET.

Of Burns's position as a poet it is difficult for any one to speak who was born in England, even though he come of an Ayrshire stock; fortunately, after the lapse of nearly a century since Burns's death, it is superfluous to say much on this head. He was essentially Scotch, and essentially the poet of the poor, whom he best understood. All his finest illustrations is of the life, manners, and scenery of the Lowlands, and from his writings, supplemented by those of Sir Walter Scott, the world derived a knowledge of Scotland and of its people far deeper and more sympathetic than any that there had been before. Burns loved Nature, but, as with every-thing else, it was not so much for its own

sake as for the human element associated with it. His sympathy included the daisy and the mouse whose nest he had turned up with the plough, but he compared the fate of the mouse to his own:

"Thy poor, earth-born companion,  
An' fellow mortal;"

and he associated the daisy with the helpless maid and the luckless bard. He hoped his Muse, "though homely in attire," might touch the heart; it is because of his sincerity and of his sympathy for man, and especially for the poorer and greater portion of the race, that his popularity is undying:

"Deep in the general heart of men  
His power survives."

Burns's humour is rarely without a strain of tenderness, and even when of the broadest there is often associated with it a touch of a deeper feeling, as in the case of his chief narrative poem, probably the greatest of all poems, "Tam o' Shanter," which, in its subject and treatment, is more pleasing than the "Jolly Beggars," and has none of the weak passages which are to be found in the "Cottar's Saturday Night," and in other pieces written in classical English, instead of that Ayrshire dialect which would long since have been almost extinct had it not been preserved in his verses. Of the delightful epistles to friends, most of them written at Mossgiel, which bristle with lines that have now become proverbial, and which often show the poet at his best, there is no room here to speak at length. Of the wonderful satires it must be said that if, besides being brilliant, they were sometimes harsh or coarse, it was Burns's very love for the beautiful that caused him to attack with bitterness hypocrisy and meanness.

But it is as a writer of songs that Burns's memory will last for all time. He is the greatest lyric poet that Britain has produced, and it will be difficult to name his superior in the world's history. He found ready to hand an endless store of old songs, which have been sung by the people for centuries, and he took the familiar melody, and either composed entirely new words for it, or so altered the old version, by a few touches or additions, that any rudeness in structure or coarseness in tone disappeared under his



hand. How great a service he rendered to his country by thus purifying and idealising Scotch song only those who have studied the old collections which he used can realise; and if here and there he has written or left unrevised a coarse verse, we can only wonder that the songs he published are so pure as we find them. Sometimes he supplied to Johnson or Thomson verses of little merit when they pressed for lines for an air, and some of his English songs are no better than those of many a forgotten rhymers; but there remains a great body of melodies, welling straight from his heart, which can nowhere else be matched for its strength and passion, or for its tenderness and pity. He was most generous in his acknowledgment of indebtedness to his predecessors, Ramsay and Fergusson, but a comparison of their work, especially Ramsay's, shows how great was the advance Burns

had made. Fergusson, it must be remembered, died when he was twenty-four, and at that age Burns had produced very little that is of value. The Scotch songs that are worthy to rank with the best of Burns's works were generally written by poets—often ladies—whose fame rests upon the production of one or two pieces. For these we are very grateful, but what are they compared with the hundreds—humorous, passionate, pathetic, patriotic, convivial—left to us by Burns? Many of his songs have been already mentioned, and they are so familiar to all that any further attempt to enumerate them is unnecessary. No poet lacking Burns's warm heart, impassioned nature, and quick feelings, could have produced these pieces, which delight alike the cultured and the ignorant, the rich and the poor.

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#### XIV.—MR. WM. R. SMITH'S VALUABLE COLLECTION OF BURNSIANA.

LOVERS of Burns everywhere, will be delighted to learn that there is in Washington, in the private possession of one of Uncle Sam's humble and obedient servants, the greatest collection of Burns's works to be found in America, and with two exceptions, in the world. It comprises in all 650 volumes, of which 150 are distinct and separate editions of Burns's poems, by actual count, and 500 other works directly relative to Burns of a biographical, critical or analytical nature.

The owner is Mr. Wm. R. Smith, a native of Scotland, for forty years past superintendent of the National Botanic Garden, chairman of the parking commission which looks after Washington's trees—the pride of the nation—and president of the Society of American Florists. Despite these titles he is a poor man, for his hobby keeps him so. His unique collection is the labour of his lifetime and in size and quality is inferior only to the priceless accumulations of Burnsiana at Glasgow, Kilmarnock and London.

Besides the books there are in the collection valuable Burns manuscripts, prints, sheet songs, portraits, engravings, photographs, autographs, curios, relics and mementoes

gathered through many years and arranged with loving, reverent care and fervent enthusiasm. Compared with these 650 volumes the Mitchell library at Glasgow boasts 1,071 volumes relating to Burns and the British Museum in London a less number; but in this country neither the Library of Congress nor the Boston public library nor any of the great libraries of New York can claim anything like so wonderful a collection of Burnsiana as Smith's, although the Lenox library in New York owns some very rare Burns manuscripts in holograph.

The repository of these literary treasures is a low-roofed, vine-clad, one-and-a-half-story lodge in the Botanic Garden which Mr. Smith occupies as superintendent. It resembles nothing so closely as a Scottish forester's cottage. Against the rear side of it is built one of the many green houses of the garden, while its front walls are overgrown with ivy and the pathways leading to the door are edged with evergreen shrubs. In this lowly dwelling Mr. Smith lives as a solitary scholar and bookworm, alone with his shepherd dogs and his precious books, most of his little salary from the government being spent in

adding to them. Two of the rooms on the ground floor are filled with books, numbering 4,000 volumes, deposited in ten book cases, which almost entirely flank the walls. In the larger room are seven cases, filled with works on biography, history, science, art, poetry, light literature, botany and horticulture.

The second room, which is not over fifteen feet square, contains three cases, devoted exclusively and solely to Burnsiana. Here, on the walls, are eleven different portraits of the immortal Scottish bard—four of them engraved, three after Nasmyth by Miller, Robinson and Nicholson respectively, and one after Allen by McRae; a medallion photograph and an engraving of Skirving's portrait of Burns; an illuminated lithograph of the poet and his cottage; three photographic views of the Burns statue at Albany from different points; and a photograph of the Burns statue in Central Park, New York. Then there is a bust of Burns on a tripod—a replica of Sir John Steell's sculpture in the poet's corner in Westminster Abbey, and a portrait of George Washington and a bust of Sir Walter Scott above two of the book cases. Except this Washington portrait and bust of Scott there is nothing whatever in the room in the way of decorations or other contents but Burnsiana and articles of "Burnsomania." In the words of London *Punch*, referring to the Burns centenary at Sydenham in 1859, Smith has here

"Laid, in their niches, Burns's relics,  
Autographs, snuff boxes, letters,  
Hair of the poet himself,  
Hair of his loved Highland Mary,  
The portrait by Nasmyth, undoubted.  
Also the worm-eaten desk  
On which was composed 'Tam O' Shanter,'  
Brown as the limbs of the hags  
Who danced at that Scottish walpurgis."

His love and idolatry of Burns began when he was a lad of ten in Athelstaneford, Haddingtonshire, Scotland, when with the first two shillings he ever earned—won as a prize at school for reciting Gray's *Elegy* without a flaw—he purchased a copy of Burns's poems. His love of Burns grew as he grew, and his appreciation of the bard's Scottish declaration of independence, "A man's a man for a' that," made a man of him, brought

him to the United States and caused him to become a thoroughly ingrained American. Since then, by patient dint of rummaging old bookstores, by purchase, correspondence and exchange, he has gradually assembled his wonderful collection. As his first two shillings were spent for a copy of Burns, he says, so will his last half dollar be. When he first took charge of the Botanic Garden, shortly after the inauguration of President Franklin Pierce, the snakes were crawling about there in great profusion, even invading the sacred precincts of the lodge itself and the room in which the Burnsiana are now housed.

In the collection American and British editions of Burns are grounded separately. Among the 150 different editions is a beautiful facsimile of the first edition published, that of 1786, printed at Kilmarnock, 8vo. Then there is a well-preserved copy of the first Edinburgh edition, 1787, printed for the author and sold by Wm. Creech, with Beugo's famous engraving of Nasmyth's portrait, 8vo., and an equally well-preserved copy of the second Edinburgh, 8vo., with portrait, known as the "Stinking Edition," from the fact of a typographical error in the "Address to a Haggis," where the words "skinking ware," (sloppy goods) are printed "stinking ware." This blunder escaped the eagle eye of Burns and has been repeated in many editions, down to some of the very latest.

Then there is a copy of the Belfast edition of 1793, 2 vols. 12mo., with portrait engraved by P. Halpin, and a copy of the third Edinburgh edition of 1794, two vols., with portrait, the last one to receive the personal editing of the immortal author. Next there is a Liverpool edition of 1800, 4 vols., 8vo., with Nasmyth's portrait engraved by J. Negle, and the four famous British editions of 1801, printed respectively at Berwick-upon-Tweed, 2 vols. 12mo.; at London, 4 vols. 8vo., at Glasgow by Thomas Stuart, 8vo., and at Glasgow by Chapman & Lang, with portrait by Mackenzie. Next are two editions printed in 1802, one at Edinburgh, two vols. 32mo., and the other at Kirkcaldy, 2 vols. 18mo.

Dropping subsequent British editions for a moment and taking up the early American, this collection contains the largest number of fine American specimens in the world. First

among these is the New York edition of 1788, published by J. and A. McLean, 12mo. Gen. George Washington possessed a copy of this edition, containing his autograph on the flyleaf. Mr. Smith has been "gunning" for it for years. Recently he located it in the library of Congressman B. F. Cable of Rock Island, Ill. William H. Vanderbilt of New York was "after" it, too, but Mr. Cable declares emphatically, "Vanderbilt can't buy it!" Then there is a superb copy of the Philadelphia edition of 1801, by Benjamin Johnson, Jacob Johnson and Robert Johnson, 2 vols., 18mo., and a copy of the rare Wilmington edition of 1804, 12mo., with portrait, published by Bonsal & Niles.

Coming down to more modern American issues, there is the Philadelphia of 1807, by Peter Stewart, 2 vols., 18mo.; the Philadelphia of 1811, by Benjamin Chapman, 12mo.; the Baltimore of 1812, by A. Miltenberger, with portrait by W. R. Jones; the Baltimore of 1814, by F. Lucas, jr., and J. Cushing, 4 vols., 18mo., profusely illustrated; the Salem, N.Y., edition of 1815, by J. P. Reynolds, 2 vols., 24mo.; the Baltimore of 1816, by F. Lucas, jr. & Co., 8vo.; the Philadelphia of 1818, by Benjamin Warner, 2 vols., 18mo., with portrait; the Boston of 1820, by Wells & Lilly, 2 vols., 18mo., and the Philadelphia of 1822, by McCarty & Davis, 2 vols., 18mo., with portrait.

Then, there are copies of the S. King, New York, edition, 4 vols., 24mo., and the W. A. Bartow, New York, edition, 4 vols., 18mo., both of 1824, the latter bearing the autograph of Charles O'Connor, the distinguished New York lawyer. Still later is the 1826 New York edition, by Wm. Borradaile, royal 8vo., and the 1830 New York edition, by S. and D. A. Forbes, 12mo.; the 1831 Philadelphia edition, by J. Crissy & J. Grigg, 8vo.; the 1832 New York, by Booth & Son, 8vo.; the 1834 Boston, by Hilliard, Gray & Co., 4 vols., and the Boston edition by James B. Dow, of the same year, 2 vols., 18mo.; the 1835 New York, by Wm. Pearson, 8vo., with portrait by J. Moffat; the 1836 Hartford, Conn., by Judd, Loomis & Co., 8vo., and the New York edition of the same year, 2 vols., 24mo.; the 1840 Halifax, by Wm. Milner, 32mo.; the 1841 New York, by J. & H. G. Langley, 8vo.;

the 1842 Philadelphia, by J. Crissy, with portrait by Welsh, and the 1843 New York, by Robert P. Bixby & Co., 12mo. Concluding the American rarities mention should be made of the 1846 Philadelphia, by John Locken, 24mo.; of the 1852 New York, by Harper & Brothers, 4 vols., 12mo.; and of the 1856 Philadelphia, by Willis P. Hazard, 12mo.

Turning again to the British editions unnoticed before, the collection contains these, among other gems: London edition, 1804, 3 vols., 12mo., with portrait by R. H. Cromek after Nasmyth; Glasgow, 1804, 18mo., with portrait; Alnwick, 1808, 2 vols., 12mo.; London, 1808, "Reliques of Robert Burns," 8vo.; London, 1809, 18mo.; London, 1810, 2 vols., 12mo.; Alnwick, 1812, 2 vols., 12mo., illustrated by Bewick; Dr. Currie's edition, Edinburgh, 1815, 4 vols., 8vo., with portrait by E. Mitchell; Glasgow, 1816, 12mo., with portrait by R. Scott; London, 1817, 24mo., illustrated; Ayr, 1819, with portrait by Wedgewood; London, 1819, 2 vols., 18mo., with portrait by M. N. Bate; Glasgow, 1821, 12mo.; London, 1822, 2 vols., 12mo., with portrait by S. Freeman; London, 1823, 3 vols., 12mo.; Edinburgh, 1823, 12mo.; London, 1824, 2 vols., 8vo., with portrait by Freeman after R. Malcolm's picture; London, 1826, 24mo., with portrait; London, 1828, 8vo.; London, 1829, 8vo., with portrait by J. Rogers.

Not so many rarities occur in the numerous editions of Burns since 1820, but these selected volumes in Mr Smith's collection are worthy of particular mention: London, 1830, 2 vols., 32mo., with portrait; London, 1831, 12mo.; Glasgow, 1835, 5 vols., 12mo.; Glasgow, 1836, printed on foolscap, 8vo.; with portrait by Freeman; London, 1838, 2 vols., 4to., illustrated; London, 1838, 4 vols., 18mo.; London, 1838, imperial 8vo., with portrait by W. C. Edwards; the successive Edinburgh editions of 1838 and 1839, imperial 8vo.; London, 1839, 12mo.; London, 1840, imperial 8vo., illustrated, and the London, 1842, imperial 8vo., with portrait by Rogers.

Besides all these are a number of more recent editions that have become exceedingly scarce. Among these are the so-called



Edinburgh-Glasgow-London edition of 1846, imperial 8vo., richly embellished, with portrait by H. Robinson after drawing by Skirving; likewise the 32mo. London edition of 1846, the 32mo. Stocksley edition of 1847, the 48mo. London of 1847 and the 32mo. London of 1850, the 12mo. Edinburgh of 1852, in five vols., the celebrated London "Elzevir" of 1864 and lastly the unique 8vo. Kilmarnock of 1870. There are also sixty-four other separate and distinct editions of Burns not so rare.

Then there is an interesting collection of guide books of the land of Burns; publications of the proceedings of Burns clubs and societies, of which there are many in Scotland and in America; proceedings of the Burns federation, Burns dictionaries and concordances, memorials of the universal Burns centenary of 1859, of the Burns festival at Ayr in 1844 and of the Kilmarnock centenary of 1886 in celebration of the first publication of Burns's poems; and scrap books containing all sorts of clippings on Burns, his monuments, statues and pictures, and notes of progress made in the movements for erecting statues of Burns in San Francisco, Chicago, Providence and other American cities. Not the least prized among these accessory books are the Rev.

Hamilton Paul's clerical defence of Burns, Dean Stanley's History of the Scottish Church, and Wallace Bruce's lyrical study, "The Land of Burns."

In addition to all these literary remains of Burns and the collection of authors who have done homage to the ploughman poet's genius Mr. Smith's aggregation of Burns curios deserves special notice. Here is a gilded plaster cast of Burns's skull, a gruesome object, obtained in 1834, when the mausoleum containing Burns's body at Dumfries was opened to receive that of his wife, "Bonny Jean." Here also is a chair from Scotland, constructed after the exact similitude of Burns's chair, together with a medallion photograph of the interior of Burns's cottage at Dumfries, photographs of Burns's nieces—the Misses Begg—and photographs of their modest house near Ayr, some pen and ink sketches of the haunted Kirk of Alloway, and an oaken whisky cup—a "quaich or nuggen"—made from the rafters of that same kirk. Two other relics of these rafters are known to exist, and they are made up in the shape of chairs, one of which can be seen at Abbotsford and the other at Windsor Castle. A distant relative of Mr. Smith's long ago made these chairs and gave him the drinking cup hewn out of a chip.

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#### XV.—SONNET BY ROBERT REID.

*On reading that the great-grand-daughter of Robert Burns, who is said to have the Poet's eyes, refused to be put on exhibition at the World's Fair, Chicago.*

"SHE has the eyes of Burns," they say; those  
 great  
 Proud orbs of his that blazed with lofty  
 scorn,  
 When Meanness woke their fires; or tear-  
 drops (born  
 Of human pity) fill'd, to hear narrate  
 Some tale of wretchedness; O priceless  
 dower!  
 O starlike gems a queen might yearn to  
 gain!

O noble heritage, not given in vain  
 To one oblivious of their pride and power:  
 For much it pleases me, dear girl! to see  
 That native Independence in thee dwell  
 Which, scorning sordid gain, disdains to  
 sell  
 Those matchless glances for a paltry fee.  
 This, more than accident of eyes or name  
 Tells me whose blood is throbbing in thy  
 frame!

XVI.—REMINISCENCES OF ROBERT BURNS.

By ANDREW WANLESS, *Detroit, Michigan.*

THERE has been so much spoken and written regarding Robert Burns and his surroundings, that it is now almost an impossibility to know what is the truth and what is the untruth. Innumerable instances of these might be given, but there is little or no use in multiplying words on a subject where there can be no question.

I have before me an article on Robert Burns written at Cortland Village, N.Y., February, 1836, and signed H.S.R. After a glowing philippic to

“—— the sweetest bard

That ever breathed the soothing strain !”

the writer thus proceeds :—

“It has been my good fortune to have been long and intimately acquainted with one who was the early friend and associate of Robert Burns. Burns and K—— were born near each other, in Ayrshire ; were nearly of the same age, and their situation and prospects in life were similar.” We are indebted to this surviving octogenarian for some interesting recollections of his illustrious friend.

Burns’s bodily strength was great, and he had few competitors in athletic exercises of the field ; and in corroboration, my friend affirmed “that he could plough mair in a day than ony other twa in a’ the parish.” “Burns’s powers of conversation were of the most striking cast. His eye, his finely modulated voice, and his enunciation were all energy and eloquence.” To this tribute Sir Walter Scott bears testimony, and I may here state that he only met Burns on one occasion—in Edinburgh, in the year 1786. In his recollections of Burns, he thus speaks :—“There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments ; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character. It was large and of a dark cast, which glowed, literally glowed, when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such an eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time.” Other writers have written to the same effect, but to my mind I think the Duchess of Gordon struck

the nail on the head when she said that when in conversation “Burns had fairly carried her off her feet.” But to again quote from the article. “Burns,” said my old friend, “was always in love, and he did not, in all instances, evince much taste in his choice of objects, as some o’ his sweetest sangs were addressed to raw Scottish lasses ye wad never dream o’ admiring.” David Sillar even complains that he “could never take a walk with his friend, but Robin would chase away after the first lassie who chanced to cross their path, and would enter into conversation with her although she was a perfect stranger.” The writer then comments on Gavin Hamilton’s troubles with the church, and the origin of “Holy Willie’s Prayer.” William Fisher, it will be remembered, was the “Holy Willie,” and he was Hamilton’s “most officious opposer in the Kirk ;” but to again quote : “It was soon after this that my old friend, who now lived in a different parish from Burns, received a letter from him enclosing “Holy Willie’s Prayer,” with a request to try its efficacy on William Fisher. “I wasna slaw in complying. Fisher’s eyes sparkled wi’ glee when the first verses were read off, but when I cam’ to the seventh verse he rushed out of the room. He could stand it no longer, and frantically exclaimed, ‘That blackguard Burns !—he’ll go to hell—he’ll go to hell !’” The article in question then states that “Burns, in his twenty-fourth year, cultivated a farm in connexion with his brother Gilbert. His visits to Mauchline made him acquainted with Miss Armour, but his intimacy with ‘Jean’ being discovered, he was refused the house. To the little inn, however, Burns wad gang and then send for ‘Jean’ to come and be courted.” “My old friend was then a travelling agent for a mercantile house and often visited Mossiel. On one of these occasions he became the bearer of a present to Miss Armour, who was at that time a mother in her father’s house, and the present consisted of a bag stuffed with cheese, butter and garden vegetables. When admitted he



found the young mother with her two sons confined to her bed in an upper apartment. Burns had followed unperceived. He flew to the bed and, 'putting his face to Jean's, and sine to each o' the wee bairns, he wept as if his heart would break.'"

In the years 1786-7, Robert Burns resided in Edinburgh and, as is well known, he frequently attended the meetings of the Masonic fraternity. At one of these meetings he was introduced to Robert Ainslie. A warm friendship sprang up, and they were frequently in the habit of taking long rambles together. On the 6th of May, 1787, Burns and his young companion, mounted on horseback, left the city of Edinburgh, passed over the Lammermoor hills, and reached Berrywell, near Dunse, where the parents of his companion resided. On glancing over Burns's "Border Tour," it appears that he fell violently in love with Miss Ainslie, and he thus exclaims, "Heavenly powers who know the weakness of human hearts, support mine. Charming Rachael, may thy bosom never be wrung by the evils of this life of sorrow, or by the villainy of this world's sons." On Sabbath, Burns, along with the Ainslies, went to the parish church of Dunse, and the text selected by Dr. Bowmaker was a heavy denunciation against obstinate sinners. Miss Ainslie from some cause failed to find the text, and on observing this, Burns presented her with the following lines:—

"Fair maid, you need not take the hint,  
Nor idle texts pursue;  
'Twas guilty sinners that he meant,  
Not angels such as you."

I may here remark that I have frequently sat in the identical seat where these lines were written. This may be something to say, but it amounts to nothing in comparison to the experience of my friend, Mr. James Graham, of Detroit. Mr. Graham is a native of Ayrshire, and in course of conversation he informed the present writer that he had slept one night in the identical bed where Burns was born.

At the time of Burns's visit to Berrywell, there resided in Dunse a man who possessed some literary instincts, and known by the name of Cimon Gray. In my youthful years

I have frequently seen this gentlemen. He was then a little old man, and was in the habit of standing at his door, in the Castle Wynd, with a night-cap on his head, beeking himself in the sun. He was pointed out to me by some of my companions as "the man wha wrote a letter to Robbie Burns." Some years ago I was informed that the original letter, with Burns's reply to it, were in the possession of my friend, Charles Watson, Esq., Dunse, and, to make a long story short, copies of these letters are now before me:—

"TO MR. ROBERT BURNS, Ayrshire Poet.

"SIR,—The great merit you possess as a poet has prompted me to send to you two little poetical pieces of mine—'The Jasperiad' and 'Rejoiciad.' Whether they possess any merit as poetical compositions I would wish to know from one who is so competent a judge as you. The 'Jasperiad' is founded on fact; and though it may have a little of the caricature in it, it does not depart from the real truth. It is a recent story. A Dunse rejoicing is a very barren subject, and by no means a sublime one. I have therefore endeavoured to make the 'Rejoiciad' a little more prolific by funny allusions and a number of little stories and pictures by way of similes, though they are rather little episodes than illustrations.

"I hope you will take this liberty of mine in good part, else I would be very angry at myself for taking it. You will be so good as return the copies, for they are the only ones I have.

"I am, Sir, your most obdnt.,

"CIMON GRAY.

"Dunse, May 15th, 1787."

#### BURNS'S ANSWER.

"DEAR CIMON GRAY,—

The other day  
When you sent me some rhyme,  
I could not then just ascertain  
Its worth, for want of time;

"But now, to-day, good Mr. Gray,  
I've read it o'er and o'er,  
Tried all my skill, yet find I'm still  
Just where I was before.

"Wi' auld wives minions, give our opinions,  
Solicited or no,  
Then of its faults, my honest thoughts  
I'll give, and here they go:

"Such damned bombast, no time that's past  
Will show, or time to come;  
So Cimon, dear, your song I'll tear  
And fling it doon the lum."

Regarding the above correspondence I may be permitted to remark that the one "brither poet" might have treated the other

"brither poet" with a little more kindly consideration.

I may here state in conclusion on this subject that Robert Ainslie became eminent as a Writer to the Signet, and was the author of a work entitled "Reasons for a Hope that is in us." His daughter I have frequently conversed with. She was at that time the wife of the Rev. Mr. Robertson, one of the ministers of Dunse. Miss Ainslie I have also frequently spoken to. She comes up to my recollection as a handsome maiden lady who was respected and esteemed by all. Some years ago when in Louisville, Kentucky, my lamented friend, Hew Ainslie, the poet, informed me that he was related to the Ainslies of Berrywell. He spoke of Miss Ainslie. In fact, he would scarcely give over speaking in her praise, and curious to state, although more than half-a-century has passed away since I saw this lady, yet she still comes up to my recollection as perfect as if I had only met her "yestreen at the gloamin'." In a word, she was like Sterne's sister, "a most beautiful woman."

#### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER.

"My dear Sir,—I understand that Mrs. Muir of Tarbolton Mill is likely to be involved in great difficulties, as to the settlement the late miller made. Will you be so obliging as to let me know the state of the case, and if you think it would answer any good purpose to advocate the case to Edinburgh at once. I can answer for her. A Writer to the Signet, an intimate friend of mine, will cheerfully undertake the business, without a single sixpence of fees, and our own countryman, David Cathcart, lies under promise to me to advocate at small expense whenever I represent female poverty in distress. I am much interested for her, and will, as far as I have interest in either, move heaven and earth in her behalf. My interest in the first is vastly improved since you and I were first acquainted. Oh! there is nothing like matrimony for setting a man's face Zionward, whether it be that it sublimates a man above this visible diurnal sphere, or whether it tires him of this sublunary state, or whether the delicious morsel of happiness which he enjoys

in the conjugal yoke gives him a longing for the feasts above—or whether a poor husband thinks he has every chance in his favour as, should he go to hell, he can be no worse—I shall leave to a weel-waled Presbytery of orthodox Ayrshire Priests.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ROBERT BURNS.

"Dumfries, July 16th, 1793."

In the year 1870 the MSS. of the above letter was handed to me by a friend. I caused it to be published in the papers, and it attracted much attention on both sides of the Atlantic. Regarding it I received several letters from the Rev. Hatley Waddell, Glasgow. In his *Life and Works of Burns* he publishes the letter. Since the day it was published I have been unable to throw any light upon it any further than this, that it is my opinion that Burns was the writer of it.

Miss Jessie Lewars has been celebrated by Burns both in song and epigram. She was the daughter of Mr. John Lewars, Supervisor of Excise. Her father was dead, and she resided with her brother in Dumfries, who was in the Excise department, and Burns and he, till the poet's death, were close companions and friends. Miss Lewars, as is well-known, was Burns's ministering angel when the angel of death was hovering near. When the poet's heart was filled with gloomy forebodings—when his soul had sunk down to the very depths of despair—it was her presence that brought to his heart a flickering hope. The following toast was scratched on a crystal goblet containing wine which Jessie was administering to him in bed:—

"Fill me with rosy wine,  
Call a toast—a toast divine;  
Give the poet's darling flame—  
Lovely Jessie be thy name."

Mrs. M'Pherson, who resided and who died some time ago in Detroit, was a native of Dumfries. She informed me that at one time her parents lived next door to Jessie Lewars, and a kindly relationship existed between the two families. On her return from her last visit to the land of her birth, she handed me a copy of the following poem, with this statement that Burns, while residing at Brow for the benefit of sea-bathing, composed it there and presented it to Miss

Lewars. She gave a copy of this poem to one of Mrs. M'Pherson's relations, and this copy I have now before me. On glancing it over in Mrs. M'Pherson's presence, I expressed some doubt regarding the authorship, upon which she became as mad as the deil pu'in' heather, and said that no another man on earth could have written it but Robbie Burns, and again explained how the copy of the poem came into her possession, with the additional statement that this was the last poem he ever composed. If it is Burns's composition, it is somewhat strange that it has never appeared in print. As before stated, Miss Lewars resided in Dumfries, but there can be little doubt but what she frequently visited him at Brow and administered to his wants. In corroboration I quote from one of Burns's letters to Mrs. Burns, written in the early part of 1796: "I am happy to hear by Miss Lewars that you are all well." The poem in question I now copy:—

#### WEARIN' AWA'.

The sun lies clasp'd in amber clouds  
Half hidden in the sea,  
And o'er the sands the glowing tide  
Comes racing merrily :  
The hawthorn hedge is white wi' bloom,  
The wind is soft and low,  
And sad and still you watch by me,  
Your hand clasp'd in mine own.

Oh, let the curtain bide, Jessie,  
And raise my head awae,  
And let the bonnie setting sun  
Glint in on you and me.  
The world looks fair and bright, Jessie,  
Near loving hearts like you,  
But puirith's blast sifts summer's love,  
And makes leal friendships few.

Oh, Jessie, in the dreary night,  
I clasp my burning hands  
Upon those throbbing sleepless lids,  
O'er eyes like glowing brands  
And wonder in my weary brain  
If haply, when I'm dead,  
My auld boon-friends for love of me  
Will gi'e my bairnies bread.

O, did the poor not help the poor,  
Each in their simple way,  
With humble gift and kindly words,  
God pity them I say !  
For many a man who clasp'd my hand  
With pledges o'er the bowl,  
When the wine-halo passed away,  
Proved but a niggard soul.

O, blessed thought, midst our despair,  
There is a promise made,  
That in the day the rough wind blows  
The east wind shall be stay'd.  
A few short years and those I love  
Will come again to me,  
In that bright realm without a sun—  
That land without a sea.

O wilt thou gang o' nights, Jessie,  
To my forsaken hearth,  
And be, as thou hast been to me,  
The truest friend on earth ?  
Sae sweetly wi' your linnet voice,  
You'll sing my weans to rest,  
While Jeanie leans her weary head  
Upon your loving breast.

Ah ! what is fame ? Its wreath of bays  
Cools not the fever'd brow,  
Will't tell his name in coming day  
Who whistled at the plough,  
And wrote a simple song or two  
For happier hearts to sing  
Among the shining sheaves of corn,  
Or round the household ring.

Yet would I prize the bubble fame  
If my own artless lays  
Bore they sweet deeds and lovingness  
For future time to praise.  
True soul ! I bless the poet skill  
Which won a friend like thee,  
Whose love, 'twixt love of home and heaven,  
Is with me constantly.

My esteemed friend, the Rev. Mr. Dickie, who resides in Detroit, and who is a native of Ayrshire, informs me that he well remembers Tam Samson. He states that he with other boys were in the habit of roaring into Tam's window, "Tam Samson's dead;" when out he would come as fast as he could hobble and cry, "Ye scorpions that ye are, if I could get a haud o' ye I wad let ye ken whether I am dead or no."



## XVII.—BURNS.

*By MARTIN BUTLER.*

As each succeeding year returns,  
We meet to honour Robert Burns ;  
Of Scotia's bards the prince and peer,  
And dearly loved and cherished here.

The rugged hills and barren isles  
Awake with laughter, songs, and smiles,  
At touch of his poetic wand,  
Unto each far, remotest land.

He sang the songs of joy and woe  
In cabins of the poor and low ;  
Whose quickening spark upswelling high  
Has mounted till it reached the sky.

Not prince, or lord, or king is great,  
But he who conquers adverse fate—  
And bids the flowers of love to bloom  
Around the altar or the tomb.

I've shared his laughter, joy, and mirth,\*  
By tavern bar or cottage hearth ;  
And listened to his "heartfelt prayer"  
In lonely glens, by Doon or Ayr.

And I, the least of all, the Muse  
Of mortals ever deigned to choose,  
Would weave a chaplet for his brow ;  
And as the changing year returns  
Will bless the name of ROBERT BURNS.

## XVIII.—THE PERSONALITY OF BURNS.

*By THOMAS DAVIES.*

A MANLY genius occasionally comes into the world. The central truths, the beautiful harmonies, of this great cosmos in which man lives are not understood and appreciated until genius discovers and interprets them. Humanity owes much to its great men.

On a blustering January day in the year 1759, in a cottage near Ayr, a man-child was born. That child was named Robert Burns. His parents were poor, toiling, honest folk. His father was a gardener and farmer, a serious, religious man, of stubborn integrity, independent spirit, with a strong sense of right. His mother was a sweet and gentle woman, who faithfully performed the duties of the humble household. The situation of the family compelled its members to toil. Burns received little regular school instruction. His education was not through masters and books, but his spirit was ready for all experiences, and his genius gave him that insight which no culture can supply. His father, with a respect for learning which is characteristic of the Scotch, gave him what instruction he could. Mr. John Murdoch, schoolmaster, taught him English grammar and composition. Mason's collection of

Prose and Verse fell in the boy's way, and he committed to memory many religious and secular poems. He was thoughtful and grave in his boyhood, and, strange to say, his ear was then remarkably dull and his voice untunable.

Burns was early introduced to the labours of the farm. He passed his life in the western and southern portions of the Lowlands ; the first six years at his birthplace ; the next eleven on a farm at Mount Oliphant, near by, leased by his father ; six on a farm at Lochlea, where his father died, worn out by hard work and financial difficulties ; four at Moss-giel, where he and his brother were engaged in farming. The winters of 1786 and 1787 were spent in Edinburgh ; the summer intervening between those winters in tours in the Lowlands and Highlands ; the three years following at Ellisland, as lessee of a farm ; and the last five years at Dumfries, where he died on July 22, 1786, in his thirty-eighth year. During the most of his life he was occupied in farm work ; during the seven years preceding his death he was an excise-man in the service of the government. His married life may be said to have commenced

\* In imagination.



with the Ellisland period. The principal portion of his works were composed during the last twelve years of his life.

Burns was a brave man and a noble genius. He shirked no duty. As a farmer and gauger he worked faithfully. He toiled, he felt, he thought, he experienced much. He had his share of sorrow and sin, regret and remorse; he had, too, his share of hope and joy, achievement and gratification. During his short life, with its hard work and poverty, his genius had time to look into the core of things, to recognize their true relations, and to express his thoughts and emotions in melodic, rhythmic poetry.

His fate was like the fate of many others to whom the world owes much—the full measure of his greatness was not taken until he was in his grave. Humanity is not to blame for its failure to reward those who greatly serve it; there are limitations upon its powers, and superb genius, to be fully understood, often must await the flight of time to develop that understanding.

The creations of his genius are now part of the heritage of the human race, and so long as mind exists, the poems and songs of Robert Burns will refine, delight, and dignify humanity. Scotchmen have the proud privilege of calling him fellow-countryman; he belongs to the world and to all time.

What are the elements of his greatness? As a man, he was courageous, just, loving, sympathetic, free, generous, democratic. As a poet, he was sincere, quick to perceive the kernel of truth, and the analogies and relations of things; sensitive, passionate, humorous, satirical, with marvellous power of poetic expression.

His genius was rich and versatile. The elements of passion, tenderness, pathos, beauty, melancholy, imagination, enter into his works. He dealt with the elemental forces of humanity, which sway prince and peasant alike. He had a vivid insight into character, masculine and feminine, exhibited with happy touches. The personality of the man flowed into his works, and we know Burns the man through his poems and songs.

Genius has been defined as that which creates, produces or invents. The Reason and the Imagination are its chief elements.

The genius of the poet sees the subtle relations of things in life and nature, and expresses the good, the true, and the beautiful in original ways. It compares, analyzes, judges, feels, imagines, and reproduces with creative originality.

Burns had sensibility, passion, insight, sense of moral truth and of justice, sympathy with all forms of nervous life, perception of beauty, reason, imagination, and a most delicate sense of rhythm and verbal expression. These qualities and faculties, combining and idealizing the impressions received from touch with matter and spirit, constituted his genius.

The poet selects the more important truths of life, and symbolizes and typifies them. The poet is the greatest of teachers, though he teaches indirectly. What a sermon is the poem "To a Mouse!" What a moral lesson is "The Address to the Unco Guid!" How beautifully the solicitudes of the human mother are presented in "The Dying Words of Poor Mailie!" This man's soul touched life on all sides. He expressed all varieties of affection; he satirized canting hypocrisy and cold, unsympathetic virtue; he expressed the frolic moods of the mind in its convivial and social hours; he stirred the heart to patriotism and love of liberty. What a spirited narrative of rollicking life is "Tam O'Shanter!" What a noble declaration of the dignity of manhood is "A Man's a Man for a' That!" What knowledge of the feminine heart he shows in "Tam Glen," and in "The Braw Wooer!" What passion in "The Farewell to Clarinda!" What plaintive melancholy in "Open the Door to Me, O!" What humour in "Death and Dr. Hornbrook!" What familiarity with human life in "The Twa Dogs," and "The Brigs o' Ayr!" What satire in "The Holy Fair," and "The Ordination!" What discriminating characterization and graphic description in "Halloween!" All sincere and true, as from the heart of Nature herself.

Burns dwelt in Scotland all his life. His purpose, formed in his twenty-seventh year, to go to the West Indies, was changed by the favourable reception of the first edition of his poems, and he remained in the land of his birth.

Scotland! Land of romantic scenery and

noble history! Her rugged and indented coast is washed by sea and firth. Stream and streamlet vein her hills and dales; on her bosom dwell beautiful lakes. Land of muir and glen, mountain and heather, wild flower and bracken, gowan and laverock! Land dotted with castles and abbeys, associated with the glorious lives of the brave and the leal! There the poetic soul can find inspiration in the picturesque and beautiful in natural scenery, the heroic and noble in the historic past, the sensible and the tender in actual life. Scotland! Land of brave and honest men, of fair and gentle women, where learning and character are respected, morality and religion valued, science and literature cherished!

Burns lived in the scenes of the sufferings and triumphs of the Covenanters, a locality famous for strong Calvinism, deep and earnest discussion of the problems of foreknowledge and free will. A few clergymen and many of the better educated of the laymen sympathized with the liberal doctrines about original sin, called the New Light Doctrines; but most of the clergymen and the common people adhered to the Auld Light Doctrines. A strict formalism and an officious meddling characterized the Auld Lights. The private debauchery and public formalism of some of the Auld Lights, and the clashings of the two sects, called into being the satires of Burns upon the inconsistency of private practice with public profession in much of the life about him.

The legislative union of England and Scotland, in 1707, had destroyed the national independence of the latter country, and had almost destroyed her political existence. A close franchise prevailed, and a few members of the leading families controlled in politics. The vigorous patriotism and the strong Scottishism of Burns revived the political and literary life of Scotland.

The Muse of Auld Scotia had created many fine poetic forms. Ramsay and Fergusson had written good lyrics. The dialect of the country, with its sweet vowel sounds, and its frequent elision of harsh consonants, is adapted to poetry. Flexible and soft, like the Italian, it lends itself to picturesque power and delicate sentiment, and is a

superior vehicle for melting song. Into this noble and delicate vehicle of poetic expression, Burns, during his short life, poured his immortal genius.

That genius received its creative stimuli from the life about it, which to others was commonplace and unsuggestive. A woman deserted by her lover, was a subject for the contempt of Mrs. Grundy; her misfortune was the germ of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon." The cant of William Fisher was offensive to his acquaintances; it caused Burns to dip his pen in truth and to write a great satire of hypocrisy in general. Wallace and Bruce were proud memories to Scotchmen; their heroism drew from Burns a grand ode to liberty and patriotism. The home of the parents of Burns was humble, and their lives were toilsome and circumscribed, but from that home he received the germinal materials which, shaped by his artistic imagination, grew into "The Cottar's Saturday Night," a beautiful idyl of contented, loving, holy family life. An old song which tickled ribald tastes, was the dunghill whence, under the husbandry of Burns's genius, sprang "John Anderson, My Jo," a splendid lyric, expressing the deep and tender affection of an old wedded pair, going, hand in hand, with cheerful love, towards the future. A few ragged beggars carousing at Poosie Nancy's tavern, excited the contempt or disgust of spectators in general; that scene, with its wild abandon, and tatterdemalion actors, will live forever in the Cantata of the "Jolly Beggars," an unparalleled collection of humorous lyrics. The coquetry of a sweetheart evoked playful comment among the many; it stirred Burns to that truthful portrayal of feminine caprice and love, "Duncan Gray cam' here to Woo." Ellison Begbie was a servant lassie, amiable and respectable; Burns loved her, and imperishably enshrined her in "On Cessnock Banks there Lives a Lass," a song full of beautiful similes and personal description. A Captain Matthew Henderson was known in the convivial society of Edinburgh; he died; his boon companions regretted the passing away of a jolly good fellow. Burns, in sublime poetry, calls upon all nature to mourn his loss.

Burns knew the movements of his own

soul. His relations to Scotland and to humanity are portrayed with touching pathos in "The Vision," in the poetic vignette of himself, "Contented wi' little and canty wi' mair," in his rhymed Epistles, and in the majestic and melancholy Lament.

The genius of Burns is not alone in ideas and emotions; it is shown in his style, in the use of natural symbols to express truth and feeling. Verbal and figurative felicities appear on every page of his poetry.

His chief work in this life was to write poetry, that is, to rhythmically express noble thought, beautiful sentiment, sincere passion, in poetic form. He wrote great poetry because of his power to conceive generic truth and to typify it in the particular.

The truths of Nature and of Life are coy and mysterious; the springs of passion and motive are hidden and involved. Genius penetrates below the surface to the heart of things. Isolated facts of daily life become interesting when shown in their relations to central truths. Genius has this power to perceive relations, to proceed from the individual to the general, from the isolated to the relative, to select the important forces and phenomena, and present them to humanity. Thus, by genius, in science and in poetry, nature and life are studied and unfolded to the mind of the race. When this power of insight is equalled by the power of artistic expression, we get such a man as Burns.

Genius is not only displayed in original discovery, but in presenting known truths in new relations, thus giving new truth. By genius the race is moulded gradually into a harmonious and sympathetic whole.

Human life is a vast and complicated drama, with countless motives, plots and actions. Individuals influence each other subtly and strongly in the interplay of emotion, intellect, and will. The apparent chaos of the mass is harmonized by the Reason and the Imagination of the philosopher and the poet. The great poet is necessarily philosopher as well, using his wisdom in harmony with his sympathy and sense of beauty.

The poet of human life deals with a subject the most complicated and elusive of all subjects. Clear insight, deep wisdom, cordial sympathy, must the poet have to understand

and interpret the varied and varying forces of the soul, with its convolutions and inter-twistings of passions, ideas and volitions.

Nature and mind are before us, but we do not see them in all their manifold operations and relations. The poet shows us what we have not seen before, and shows in new colours what we have already seen. Nature herself furnishes him symbols of thought.

Though Nature is great and interesting, it is Man in his relations to Nature, in his conceptions of his environment, in his conceptions of the supernatural, in his developments and contrasts of character, that attracts our chief interest.

"Though worlds on worlds in myriad myriads roll,  
What know we greater than the soul."

The qualities, receptive, imaginative, and expressional, necessary to understand and interpret life, Burns possessed; the results of their activity are embodied in his poetry. Nature and life are seen by us through the prism of his mind. He produced no epic or drama; his genius assumed mainly the lyric form; and as we read or hear his poems and songs, we feel the sweet, fervid, powerful personality of this, our fellow man; while we admire the genius, we love the man.

No man is perfect. Human perfection has been sought, but not found. Weeds flourish with flowers. Mortality is weak. The errors of Burns sprang from the impulses of a warm temperament, from his vibrating sensibility, his hearty conviviality—his capacity for love and friendship. He felt the charm of woman and love; he felt the glow of wit and friendship. He erred, he suffered; we sympathize, even if we condemn. His errors, melancholy, and remorse are freely revealed in his poems.

But if we think of him as the loving gallant, charmed by and charming the fair sex; if we think of him as the convivial companion, delighting and astonishing by his flashing wit and biting satire, facts warrant us also in thinking of him as the lofty patriot, the honest worker, the earnest thinker, the lover of nature, in daily communion with her; the loving husband, whose memory was fondly cherished by his widow. If we think of him as the great poet, we may also



think of him as the sorrowful, suffering man, bowing before the Almighty will, seeking Almighty aid.

We should remember that we live in a conventional society, with whose institutions and rules the passions of strong natures are often at war. When society condemns, Old Nature herself may smile contentedly at the overflow of her forces.

The passions and impulses of Burns were strong. He was no hypocrite. If his errors and sins were not seen by others, he himself confessed them with the frankness of a great soul, and in the confession we often find a justification. He was not a man of the closet or of books. He moved among men and women, hoping and feeling intensely, and by his charm and vivacity, becoming the centre of the hopes and feelings of others. Those who blame him may be silenced by his own words in the "Address to the Unco Guid."

We should not judge him harshly because he composed some coarse poems. With Burns, to feel was to write. From his higher nature came much that is noble, tender, and true. From the frolic humours produced by the Spirit of Wine and the Spirit of Love came a little of the gross and obscene. From what we know of the lower nature of humanity, which co-exists with genius as well as with commonplace human nature, it is surprising that Burns, with his irresistible impulses to express all his experiences, did not write more of the indecorous. The will can govern cold temperaments. Contrast Burns with other poets! He is the poet of natural feeling; experience at once gave him creative momentum. From this intimate connection between feeling and poetic creation, we get his great collection of poems, and if, from this law of his temperament, he was occasionally inspired by a high-kilted Scottish Muse, and wrote a few gross poems, growing out of local events, composed for the amusement of his friends, and not for publication, we ought not to seriously complain. Literary students who know the erotic and bacchanalian character of many Scottish poems written before the time of Burns, are surprised that on the whole he wrote so purely.

His sound, sunny personality comes to us through his works. In his early poems he exhibits a hearty sympathy with peasant life and manners. His rhymed epistles to his friends express with playful and familiar humour his views of life, and his personal hopes, fears and ambitions. It is manifest in these early poems that he had confidence in his poetic power. He depicted the true, the beautiful, the pathetic, the humorous, with fidelity and sympathy; he satirized the false, the hollow, the selfish, the hypocritical, with energy and contempt. The dialect of his native land was adapted to his lyric genius, but he imparted to it a grace and charm all his own.

All kinds of life appealed to him. The ourie cattle and silly sheep, out in the storm of the winter night; the unhoused mouse, the crushed gowan, the dying ewe, anxious for her young; the limping hare, victim of man's selfish sport; the faithful old mare; the unfortunate love-child, the deserted sweet-heart, the melancholy lover,—men and women and animals, in the sorrows and joys of life, all excited the sympathies of Burns. He had words of kindness and hope even for the de'il. No poet has written so passionately and meltingly of love, in all its varieties.

Almost all his poems are in the Scottish dialect, but his subjects are the elemental forces of life, and he appeals to the universal heart of humanity. He was a ploughman, a gauger, without classical learning or extensive reading, with nothing but the clear vision and vibrating heart, the delicate fancy and lofty imagination of genius; ever ready to receive suggestion from its environment. Many of his poems and songs were composed in the open air, with the breezes blowing upon his face, the sky, the river, the hills and dales, the trees and rills, the trembling flowers, the songs of birds, the incidents of animal and human life, all speaking their messages to him.

He seized the typical and spoke to humanity. The rigidly righteous live in Moscow as well as in Ayr. The dignity of manhood may be taught in Madrid as well as in Edinburgh. The melancholy truth that man was made to mourn saddens the exile in Siberia as well as the peasant in Scotland.



The pathos and fire of Burns's love songs touch and stir the hearts of men and women on all continents. Rough men have shed tears on the recital of his pathetic poems. Kings and queens in their palaces, nobles in their halls, merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, labourers; miners and shepherds in lonely places; soldiers at the bivouac, sailors in the fore-castle—strong men, gentle women, rollicking students, tender girls, all have felt his magic power. He has written hundreds of songs, and the song is the most touching of all forms of literature.

Although Burns in his boyhood was thought to have an unmusical ear, he developed in after life a delicate taste in rhythmic expression. His favourite practice in composing his songs was to walk amid beautiful scenery, hum a favourite tune, and fit his sentiments and words to it, culling apposite rhetorical figures from the scenery about him. He was quick to hear and retain old melodies, and to use them as the vehicles of new songs. Many old songs were refined and beautified by passing through his soul. As with Nature herself, Autumn was his ripest season.

He was the greatest poet of his time. He was also the best ploughman and mower in his neighbourhood. He delighted in feats of rustic skill and endurance. He was a virile thinker and a brilliant talker. Men and women of the intellectual and fashionable life of Edinburgh were fascinated by his powerful conceptions, his well chosen language, his magnetic personality. He met them with dignified independence; the men were instructed, the ladies charmed; his character and manners elicited both admiration and respect. The presence of ladies restrained his natural vehemence, excited his fancy and tenderness, and refined his vivacity.

Burns had a mind of large general powers, which would have fitted him for any pursuit. He became a poet, laboured earnestly in his craft, and richly did he deserve the Crown of Holly which Coila placed upon his brow.

His body was strong and well-knit; his

face noble, interesting, and expressive; his eyes fine and lustrous, glowing when he was moved by tender feeling or angry indignation; his voice was flexible, and corresponded in tone to his emotion.

He was a great poet because his moral perceptions were true. We find in him no trace of avarice, meanness, cynicism, dissimulation, servility or arrogance. Now and then we see an eddy of discontent and bitterness, soon obliterated by a stream of cheerful philosophy and courageous resolution.

His life was, from a worldly point of view, a failure. He was born poor, he lived poor, he died in debt, leaving his widow and children destitute. After the publication of the first edition of his poems, he was lauded for a season, but was comparatively neglected during his later years. But he left the world a legacy whose value cannot be measured by money standards.

Always poor, oftentimes sad and melancholy, still, from the right point of view, his life was in the highest degree a success. There are chords in the heart of humanity which will always respond to the touch of this virile and tender Master, this poet of natural emotion and universal sympathy. We hear occasionally a discordant note, but it may truthfully be said that Burns is the musical voice of the universal soul in its loftiest thoughts, strongest passions, sweetest feelings.

We describe this person and his external life, but how can we describe the mind that was within him? Oh, wonderful mystery of mind! The physical atom called Burns, being and moving in that nook of the Infinite labelled Scotland, had within it a soul, which drank at Nature's fountains, and after some subtle process within, poured its fluent genius into poem and song, which, like perennial springs, flow in to ennoble, and purify the soul universal.

Robert Burns! On this old Earth Thou wert great mortal! From this little isthmus of Time, we stretch our hands and spirit to Thee, and hail Thee, Immortal.

## XIX.—SCOTLAND'S GLORY.

*How the "25th" is celebrated in Brooklyn, N. Y.*REPRINTED FROM THE *BROOKLYN CITIZEN*.

OVER three hundred Scotch men and women celebrated last night in Bartholdi Hall, Brooklyn, the anniversary of the birth of Burns. The affair was under the auspices of the Greenpoint Burns Club. The distinguishing Scotch trait, thoroughness, came out strong in the celebration. Most of the people got to the hall at 7 o'clock last night, and a great many stayed until that time this morning. Between this period they enjoyed an excellent dinner, listening to some very able addresses, heard once more the songs of their childhood, saw the Highland fling danced in costume, and then, about 1 a.m., evened up matters by beginning to dance down an order which contained twenty dances, mainly Highland schottisches, reels and caledonians.

But then the birthday of Burns comes but once a year, and the thrifty and hardworking Scotch people try to crowd the pleasures of months into that one night. In some respects, too, Burns's day is something more than the mere celebration of a great poet's birth. In the nature of events it has become the national holiday of the whole Scotch people, and it is celebrated with something of the patriotic fervour which makes the Fourth of July unique among American holidays.

The banqueting hall was a picturesque and pleasing sight along about 9 o'clock, after the Rev. Dr. Sproul had said grace, and President Kellock had given the signal for the dinner to begin. The bare pillars and posts were hidden under a drapery of bunting and flags of all nations, and over the guests' table hung a picture of the poet. Five long tables, each of which extended the full length of the hall, were crowded with the diners, little family groups, father, mother, daughter; fine, sturdy, hardy, intelligent-looking men, neat and handsome women. No person present last night will hereafter put any faith in the prevailing fallacy that the Scotch are a homely race. Neither will they believe with Sydney Smith that a Scotchman requires a surgical operation to comprehend a joke. Sydney had reference probably to English jokes. Cer-

tainly, the jokes that were made last night by Assistant District Attorney Clarke "caught on," as they say in the theatre.

After some appropriate remarks by President Kellock, the Herald Glee Club sang "Hail to the Chief," and then the Hon. Mr. Thomas E. Pearsall responded to the first toast of the evening, "Robert Burns." Mr. Pearsall spoke with fluency and feeling, and his hearers showered him with well merited applause. He said:—Allow me to say that I am pleased to see so many enthusiastic and intelligent men and women assembled to-night to give expression to their national feelings for the illustrious Robert Burns; to do honour to the shrine of the humble, unassuming ploughman whose name has become a household word in our land. Every Scotchman and true admirer of Burns have bowed with enthusiasm at the matchless power of his magic pen. His birthday is celebrated in every land, and whenever it is observed throughout our own country his many warm-hearted admirers do honour to his great genius. Fairer faces and a more charming assembly of men and women do not always grace the festive board, and we are gathered here to-night to honour the natal day of Robert Burns—him

The chief of Bards that swell  
The heart with songs of social flame  
And high delicious revelry.

One hundred and thirty-one years have rolled away since the birth of Robert Burns, and more than ninety-three years since his death. I think we may safely say, that as long as the Scottish dialect lasts his name and fame will be co-equal therewith. The universal admiration and high esteem in which he is held is marvellous; it extends to every part of the world where Scotchman are to be found, and indeed, ladies and gentlemen, where are they not to be found? In the principal cities of this country there are "Burns clubs," the members of which assemble every year to express their admiration for the great minstrel, and at the very moment

while we are here indulging in these expressions they are doing the same. The poems of Burns are to be found in the homes of almost every Scotchman, and we may hazard the assertion that there exists no son or daughter of Caledonia, wherever they dwell, who is not a better and nobler being by having read the biography and productions of Robert Burns. Vast indeed must have been his power over the human soul, for his works are not confined to the homes of his countrymen only, whose manners and dialect he has forever embalmed in verse, but they are met with in the well selected library of everyone who knows the English language, and possesses any degree of taste for gems of fine sentiment. But the love which a Scotchman bears for the memory of the Ayrshire bard is unsurpassed, and perhaps cannot be compared in its intensity with that felt by the native of any other land. One would almost think that the mantle of inspiration had fallen on him when in one of his humorous songs he said :

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',  
But aye a heart aboon them a':  
He'll be a credit till us a',  
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

But when he speaks directly to man and of man, how manly is the sentiment and how elevating and hopeful are the well-known words in which he vindicates the dignity, ay, the majesty of manhood.

The rank is but the guinea stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that.

And who does not recollect the chivalrous compliment he paid the fair creation, when alluding to the bountiful manner in which nature had lavished on them so many charms

Her prentice hand she tried on man,  
And then she made the lasses, O !

One of the most marked features in our poet's character and writings is his love of country. Listen how touchingly he gives utterance to his early feelings, and they remained with him to the last. He had—

A wish, that to my latest hour  
Will strongly heave my breast ;  
That I for puir auld Scotland's sake,  
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,  
Or sing a sang at least.

And, sir, did he not sing a song, did he not, for poor old Scotland's sake, sing a song that has rendered himself and his country celebrated throughout the world? In every relation of life we find ourselves associated with the poetry of Burns. In love and happiness, in sorrow and care he carries us away, and is really and truly the poet of the people. Meeting with old friends brings up the days of "auld lang syne." If laden with care and sadness we remember that—

The poor oppressed honest man  
Had surely ne'er been born  
Had there not been a recompense  
To comfort those that mourn

But if we find sympathy in our sadness and despondency, to what a pitch does our mirth go when led on by Burns ; what a fund of pleasure do we derive from his "Hallow-e'en ;" his "Cottar's Saturday Night," and above all his "Tam O'Shanter," and who does not sympathize with honest Tam and with the witnesses in full chase, shrieking :

" Ah, Tam, ah, Tam, thou'lt get thy fairin',  
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin',  
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin',  
Kate soon will be a waefu' woman."

But thanks to Maggie's heels, the "Keystone of the brig" is won and Tam is safe. But I will continue and remark, Burns is peculiarly the poet of the people, the poet of the working man. Born to a life of poverty and toil, he knew by sad experience the many woes and hardships which are incident to a lowly condition of life. In his writings, their sentiments, their feelings find the most earnest utterance. There are passages in Burns which none but a poor man could have written ; passages which none but the working man can fully appreciate. Such passages are to be found in "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Man was made to mourn," and above all, in that noblest and best of songs, "A man's a man for a' that." I cannot pause to give specimens of the tender and passionate poetry of Burns. He, like other poets, was a being of impulse and feeling ; he had strong passions which sometimes misled him, but his heart was always tender, and he had a generous nature ; with all his love for social pleasures his anxieties were for others, and he had learned the true secret of happiness. Where



does he place the scene of his highest duties and his dearest joys—

To make a happy fireside clime to weans and wife  
That's the true pathos and sublime of human life.

Robert Burns had only attained his 37th year when he died. Let us think of this if we would estimate rightly what he accomplished. Dying at the age of 37 Milton would have left us no "Paradise Lost" or "Regained," and Pope would have left unaccomplished the poems on which chiefly rest his fame. Burns has bequeathed to us his songs, and that is fame enough to win for him the poet's immortality. His songs are already a part of the language of our common race, and may not our hearts thrill within us this night as we think that the same songs are being sung wherever the English language is spoken, in the homes of Scotland, Ireland, England and America is heard this night that inspired song:

Then let us pray that, that come it may  
As come it will for a' that,  
That man to man, the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that.

So this night let everyone say to his neighbour, be he Irish, English, American or Scotch:

Then, gies a hand, my trusty friend,  
And here's a hand o' mine.

Mr. Thomas McQueen next sang "There was a lad was born in Kyle," and for an encore, "Rob Roy McGregor."

The second toast of the evening was "Scotland," and the response was by Mr. Andrew McLean, who was introduced by President Kellock as a gentleman who needs no introduction to any Brooklyn gathering. Mr. McLean was received with great applause, and after some general remarks, appropriate to the occasion, spoke as follows:

Scotland has so long been favoured with the goodwill of all enlightened men that eulogy or defence is now no part of the duty of her children. As she is everywhere numbered among the world's benefactors, the chief obligation imposed upon her numerous offspring is to bear themselves in a manner worthy of their origin. Traditions, luminous with the light of lofty lives, put to shame the Scotchman who stoops to ignoble behaviour.

The son may need defence, but never the motherland, whose blue eyes have ever beamed with the radiance of a stainless spirit. What is it that an occasion like this, in speaking to the toast of Scotland, calls for beyond a gentle play upon the strings of memory? The best possible response to Scotland, placed as we are, is in the songs of Scotland. To bring before your minds the cloud-capped mountains, the silvery lakes, the rivers that make music as they run, the valour of your ancestors, the flowers that sweeten the glens and redden the moors, the birds that sing in shady dells or rise to the invisible with melody on their wings, the lovely forms and still more lovely hearts of Scottish women, the pleasures of the fireside, the joys of youth, the struggles of maturity, the companionship of auld lang syne, how can these be recalled in any way so vividly as by the minstrel's spell! Scotland is enveloped in poetry as the stars of the morning and of evening are in light. She cannot in any adequate sense, be seen at all except through the atmosphere of the bard's imagination. No statistics, no matter of fact record can make Scotland understandable, for these deal but with her skeleton, or rather with what may be termed the geology of her character. She is a living thing, and we must have our account of her not from any dissecting table, but from eyes that have dwelt enraptured on the beauty of her face, from ears that have drank in the sweet tones of her voice, and from hearts that have lain upon her bosom and felt the throbbing of her deathless pulse. Scotland is great in many ways. She is renowned in arms. The enterprise of her sons has been seen on every ocean. The triumphs of her mechanical skill have lightened the burdens of labour in every clime. Her philosophers have shrunk from no problem and left few dark questions uncleared by their piercing vision. To all that distinguishes civilized from uncivilized men she has contributed her full share. Wherever the sailor breasts a tempest, wherever a steam engine multiplies the energies of industry, wherever education is prized or liberty of thought held in honour, in all the spheres of material and mental action, there men have occasion to think with gratitude of the mountain and the flood. But she is dear



to her children for other reasons than these. Before their eyes she swims a vision of beauty and nobleness and maternal dignity, such as the heart alone can make vivid and eternal excellencies beget. There are two Scotlands, one of the body and the other of the soul. The material Scotland all men may understand if they will; but the immortal Scotland, the Scotland with a title to live forever, can be disclosed only to those who have mastered the wizard language of the muses. The latter is the Scotland with which we are concerned to-night. We drink to the land upon which the spell of Burns has been laid, the land of "Tam o' Shanter" and "Highland Mary," of Robert Bruce and "Bonny Jean," of the "Jolly Beggars" and the "Cottar's Saturday Night." Not the Clyde, with its forests of masts, but the Doon and the Nith and the Forth and the Yarrow, with their freight of supernal music, are the rivers of our affection. We honour the skill which has made barren rocks fruitful and waste places fair with the homes of a thrifty and prosperous people, but to-night we submit ourselves to the gentler sway of Campbell and Wilson, of Tannahill and the Ettrick Shepherd, of Hector McNeil and Allan Ramsay, of Fergusson and Smollett, and of the genius at whose call the forms of Roderick Dhu and Rob Roy, of Douglas and Marmion, of Dundee and the Lady of the Lake, started into life.

Oh, blessed forever be dear, old Scotland! May the sunlight always be glad to play around her granite summits and the moon delight to blend with her lochs at night. May no time ever come when the red of her heather shall not typify unyielding valour, or the fragrance of her bluebells cease to signify the tenderness of her gentle daughters! Far be the hour when the gowan in her fields shall not as now symbolize the virtues of a virtuous common people. Through all the ages, on till the last when the frame of nature shall be folded away as a vesture, may the lark represent the soaring spirit of her children, the eagle as he looks boldly from his eyrie into the full blaze of noon be an emblem of their fearless minds, and the music of the harps which have charmed the world in her name continue to be translated into lofty and harmonious deeds!

The Glee Club now sang "Robin Adair." The applause which greeted them had hardly died away when Master Norman McLachlan, a handsome little boy dressed in full highland costume, bounded upon the stage and, much to the edification and amusement of the guests and members, danced a highland fling. The boy's graceful movements were repeatedly applauded, and at the close he was presented with a basket of flowers.

The third toast of the evening, "The United States," was responded to by Postmaster Hendrix. Mr. Hendrix was loudly applauded as he arose to speak. He said that they had undoubtedly received great satisfaction from the reminiscences of Burns as given by the first speaker. They had the rare privilege of having told to them in high and lofty strain that which to Scottish hearts was forever dear. They had listened to songs which have stirred the pulse, quickened the memory and warmed the heart. If there was one subject in the realm of all subjects to be presented on an occasion of this kind, any fit to be a continuance of what had gone before, it was the one of their adopted country. Their gifted countrymen in describing Scotland had told them that there were two Scotlands, the Scotland of the body and the Scotland of the soul, the Scotland of fact and the Scotland of fancy. As adopted citizens of the great Republic they were brought face to face with fact. The United States insured them liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It was a remarkable fact that so many peoples were assimilated and identified with our institutions. Yet all the time they retained the fondest and dearest memories of their native land and yet were not one whit the less loyal to their adopted home. Long before Columbus started out, long before the Norwegians broke through Finland and came down upon the New England coast, the United States were here in all their material aspect and in all their natural grandeur. As far as the purposes of his toast were concerned, the transformation of this continent had begun and continued in 100 years. What did it all was the introduction of the best blood of the enterprising spirits, who desired only that which this country seemed to afford, liberty and progress. This was a union of peoples

as well as of States. We did not sometimes appreciate what America was. The grumblers were ready to erect barriers to keep out the peoples of the world from coming here as fast as they have. As a matter of statistics the population was using only one-fifth of our whole land. They would always extend a hearty hand of welcome to as many people from Scotland as chose to come here. They objected only to those who came with hatred in their hearts and assassination in their souls to the flag they loved. All nationalities were welcome, but when the hateful and hatred face of anarchy showed itself they felt a rebellion toward it which would not rest until it was expelled from their shores and out of American life. It did not belong here; it had no place here. Americans had a righteous determination to put anarchy down, and it would not live an hour longer than slavery was allowed to exist after the American people were thoroughly aroused. The speaker did

not believe that things were better fifty years ago. He believed in to-day.

"We will associate ourselves with your songs," said Mr. Hendrix in an eloquent peroration; we will let the bluebells ring in our ears; we will catch something of the perfume of the heather; but when sentiment is exhausted, let me ask you to turn to the Stars and Stripes and say three cheers for the red white and blue."

The Herald Glee Club sang "America," and Assistant District Attorney Clark, in the absence of Mr. Ridgway, spoke to the last toast "The Lasses," in a humorous vein, and Mr. Alexander Glass wound up this part of the festivities with "When the Kye Comes Hame."

The floor was then cleared for dancing, which was kept up until morning.

The following are the officers of the club—James Kellock, president; James Dickson, vice-president; Robert McNeil, treasurer; George Glass, secretary.

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## XX.—WHY BURNS IS HONOURED.

NEVER was poet so honoured after his death as Burns; and yet there have been many greater poets. How has he gained such an inheritance of love? Because he was the truest and most genuine of men. Because his eye flashed through all clothes adornments, stars and garters—all the splendid or obscure hulls in which the human being may enwrap itself, believing that "A man's a man for a' that." Because to him there was nothing low or mean in nature; nothing to be despised in man but falsity and lack of generosity. Because he had a love and tenderness for common things such as poets never before exhibited—a love deep as that of Nature's herself, who stains the moss on a peasant's roof-tree with an emerald surpassing the velvets of kings, and who, with equal care, gives her crimson to the tip of the daisy and her splendour to the evening star. Burns believed in the inherent dignity of man. Ramsay, for instance, did not. In the "Gentle Shepherd," beautiful pastoral as it is, Patie and Peggie are too good to have been born "in huts where poor men lie," and, to

satisfy the poetic wigmaker's sense of the fitness of things, they are discovered to be scions of a noble house. That explained their delicate sentiments; that explained their gentleness of manner; that explained the grace with which they danced on the village green. Nature is strong, but noble blood is stronger. Burns did not abhor this weakness and folly of Ramsay, for he could not understand it. It was incomprehensible to his poetic mood. He never played false to his order in that way. In the "Cottar's Saturday Night" there is displayed a dignity and nobility of manner, a seriousness and reverence of spirit, far surpassing in worth the more florid accomplishments of Ramsay's *pseudo* shepherd and shepherdess, although the actors are but toilers of the earth. Jenny wins her "penny fee," and the pure blush of love is on her cheek; the face of the "priest-like father" is furrowed with care, and brown with wind and rain, and when the chapter is read, hands hard with the mattock and the plough-shaft are clasped in prayer. This is the way that Burns ennobles poverty and

makes it honorable; and when he himself breaks in upon the scene, it is with a fervent prayer that however "crown and coronets be rent," men and women like these, dutiful sons and daughters, pious and provident fathers and mothers, may never die out of Scotland. For these constitute a nation's strength; out of these rise the golden pinnacles of an empire; these give battle flags to abbey and cathedral. These give splendour to the reigns of kings, and victories to the page of history.

Burns's way of life led him among common people and common objects, and his "lofty" spirit "sanctified the mean." His song never deserted these things. His humour overflowed in "Halloween," and the "gangrel bodies" that assembled nightly at the Mauchline tavern. He sang of the daisy and the mouse, his "freen' and fellow mortal," whose nest in the furrow had been destroyed by the ploughshare. His pity extends to the sheep "smooored" in the snow-drift, and the bird

sitting with "chittering wing" on the frozen branch. He listens to the colloquy of the "two dogs; he writes Anacreontics on "yill;" he apostrophizes the "haggis;" he leaves the seraphim burning before the throne, and, in one of his most wonderful pieces, addresses the *Deil* of Scottish tradition, in the strangest mixture of terror, humour, pity and pathos; and the long list of his songs contain the purest love poetry in the world. He is popular beyond any other poet, because beyond any other poet he felt that poetry did not belong to man's environments, but to man himself. He shed poetic glory on the poor man's life, on his labour, on the meal on his table, on his rare festivals, on his death and burial. For this he inherits the love and gratitude of millions, for he has taught them self-respect, he has made their virtues visible to the world, he has sweetened all their family relations, and he has given an immortal voice to their emotions.—*Edinburgh Weekly Herald*.

## XXI.—BURNS'S DESCENDANTS IN 1893.

Mrs. Mary S. J. Hutchison, Cleuchbrae Cottage, Mouswald, Dumfriesshire, writes as follows, March 1893,—My attention has been drawn to a paragraph in regard to Burns's legitimate descendants. The truth and accuracy of the following I can vouch for. Sarah Burns, now Mrs. Hutchison, and Burns's granddaughter, I have known from a child. She lived with her grandmother, in whose house I have been, until Mrs. Burns died. It is she who is painted with her grandmother. She is the eldest daughter of Colonel James Glencairn Burns by his first wife. By his second wife he had also a daughter, now Miss Burns. The two sisters live in Cheltenham, 23 Berkeley Street. At

present they are at 4 Charlotte Row, Weymouth. I had a letter from Mrs. Hutchison this morning. Mrs. Hutchison's husband died in Australia a few years ago. Her family consists of Annie, now Mrs. Scott, in Australia, who has no family; Robin (in Chicago), who is married, and was nearly killed last June, but, contrary to all expectation, has recovered and able to go to his office; Violet, now Mrs. Gowing, in Birkhamstead; Margaret, or, as she is generally called, "Daisy," who is the youngest, and strikingly resembles her great-grandfather, or, rather, any of his likenesses I have seen. Burns's son Robert had a daughter, who lived in Ireland. I do not know if she is living, but think not.

## XXII.—AT THE SHRINE OF BURNS.

By WILLIAM ALLAN, author of "*A Book of Poems*," etc., etc.

SLEEP, Patriot Bard, sleep on! thy honoured  
dust  
Lies here in peace, thy country's sacred trust,  
Yet not alone thy country's, for thou art

Enshrined in every freedom-loving heart,  
And wheresoe'er the patriot cry is heard,  
The soul which filled thee hath that bosom  
stirred.



Where far Columbia's lonely forests wave  
 I've seen thy spirit brooding o'er the brave,  
 Then every breast was filled with courage  
 high,  
 And every heart felt but to "do or die,"  
 Inspired to battle-deeds which shook the  
 world  
 Till Slavery's flag low in the dust was hurled;  
 Oft by the Potomac's dark-rolling streams  
 Columbia's patriot sons beheld thy dreams,\*  
 And felt the sacred fire of Freedom glow,  
 Which conquering laid "the proud usurpers  
 low,"  
 And swept away "Oppression's woes and  
 pains,"  
 While freemen's hands struck off all "servile  
 chains."

Sleep, Patriot Bard! yon sun which shines  
 above,  
 Nor brighter is, nor greater than my love  
 For thee, and all that thou hast done to  
 make  
 Earth's tyrants tremble, and her despots  
 quake.  
 Death cannot still thy voice. Time but pro-  
 longs  
 Th' eternal numbers of thy deathless songs,  
 Which cheer the lowly, raise the drooping  
 heart,  
 And to the honest poor new hopes impart,  
 And fill the coward breast with valour's fire,  
 And make the brave to braver deeds aspire,  
 And in the ears of earth's down-trodden  
 throng

Proclaim triumphant Right and conquered  
 Wrong,  
 And sound with thunder tones God's primal  
 plan—  
 The Universal Brotherhood of Man.

Sleep on, Immortal One! thou sleepest well,  
 Amid the scenes where Genius flung her  
 spell;  
 The "cottar's home" still hears the fervent  
 prayer  
 Which "honest men and bonnie lasses"  
 share;  
 The "ruined kirks" declare thy scenes of hell,  
 The "groaning trees" thy witches howling  
 tell;  
 The "murmuring streams" thy tunefulness  
 proclaim,  
 The "modest flowers" breathe forth their  
 lover's name,  
 The "little birds" still chant thy kindred  
 lays,  
 Thy songful spirit haunts the "banks and  
 braes,"  
 While I, with love and pride, a pilgrim here,  
 Shed on thy storied tomb affection's tear,  
 And give the homage of my heart to thee,  
 Thou great Hierophant of Liberty.

Sleep, Patriot Bard! Adieu! thy honoured  
 dust  
 Lies here in peace, thy Scotland's sacred  
 trust;  
 Yet not alone old Scotland's, for thou art  
 Enshrined in every freedom-loving heart.

### XXIII.—THE BURNS STATUE AT ALBANY, N. Y.

BY D. M. HENDERSON, BALTIMORE, M.D.

'Tis he, our Burns in bronze made manifest—  
 The subtlest ken, the inmost secret caught,  
 Disclosed of art, by cunning fingers wrought,  
 The heart's ideal, ne'er till now expressed!  
 'Tis he, in truth, the years that try and test—  
 The kind, cruel years, that winnow work and  
 thought—  
 Bequeath us this. The weak is all forgot.  
 This is our Burns, our strongest, tenderest!

No more to Bonnie Doon, and winding Ayr,  
 And the kirkyard, Dumfries, the pilgrim  
 turns—  
 No more to these alone—the past is there,  
 The sacred dust, the memory of Burns;  
 Here too, a shrine is hallowed, and men pay  
 Their homage to the bard, alive for aye!

\* During the Civil War in America, I have heard the soldiers of the Union and Confederate armies singing our Scotch songs.



## XXIV.—BURNS AS A SONG WRITER.

BY GEORGE SAVAGE.

*Extract from an address delivered January 25th, 1888, before the Caledonian Club of Baltimore, Maryland.*

THE highest rank must be awarded Burns as a song writer. Thomas Carlyle, ever critical and chary of praise, wrote that Burns's songs were "by far the best that Britain has yet produced," and added: "Independent of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades his poetry, his songs are honest in another point of view—in form as well as in spirit. They do not affect to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music. They have received their life and fashioned themselves in the medium of harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. If we further take into account the immense variety of his subjects, how from the loud flowing revel in "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut," to the still rapt enthusiasm for "Mary in Heaven;" from the glad, kind greeting of "Auld Lang Syne," or the comic archness of "Duncan Gray," to the fire-eyed fury of "Scots wha' hae wi' Wallace bled," he has found a tune and words for every mood of man's heart, it will seem small praise if we rank him as the first of all our song writers, for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

At an early age Burns showed his love for songs, though he could never sing, and his voice remained to the last untunable. A collection of songs came into his possession when he was but a lad, and he wrote: "I pored over them driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse, carefully noting the true, tender or sublime from affectation and fustian. I am convinced that

I owe to this practice much of my critic craft, such as it is." His fame would be enduring if he had written only the songs of which Carlyle speaks so highly.

"Let me write the songs of a people and you may make its laws," said Fletcher; and we may well claim that Burns by his songs alone, left not only upon Scotland but upon Britain an impress more durable and valuable than that of any legislator. His songs, numbering nearly three hundred, have become celebrated, and many of them are as familiar as household words in Scotland and England, and they are known and appreciated wherever the English language is spoken. Wherever the joy and the woe of existence are felt, alike in hut and hall, on land and sea, the spirit of Robert Burns as it is contained in his songs is ever present to cheer and bless. It is claimed by some that he will ultimately be remembered chiefly as a song writer, and if he had contributed only his songs to literature he would surely occupy a high portion as a poet and, as such, a benefactor. We find in his lyrical passions "harmony as perfect as the song of the linnet and the thrush piping to a summer evening of peace on earth and glory in the western sky," and "whatever the poet's eye has seen of beauty, or his heart has felt of mirth or sadness or madness, melts into it and becomes a tone, a chord of music of which but for one singer the world would hardly have known the power to thrill the universal heart."

## XXV.—ISOBEL BURNS.

REPRINTED FROM *THE EDINBURGH EVENING DISPATCH*.

It is almost a commonplace to say that the name of Burns is a household word all over the world. In spite of all that has been written and spoken of the poet, the interest in anything attaching to his name shows no

sign of diminution. It rather seems to grow with the advance of years, and the breaking of the links that bind the present to his generation.

There has just been published for private

circulation, by Mr. Robert Burns Begg, of Kinross, a short memoir of his grandmother, Isobel Burns (Mrs. Begg), which gives us pleasing glimpses of the home life of the poet hitherto unpublished. With a few extracts from this interesting work we have pleasure in furnishing our readers. Isobel was the youngest member of the family of William Burness, having been born at Mount Oliphant in 1771; and at her death in December 1858, at the age of eighty-eight, the last of that Ayrshire family, the type of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," disappeared from this earthly scene. It was no ordinary household. Though their lot was poverty and toil, "their superior intelligence and refinement, and a certain air of self-respect which they bore amidst all the common drudgeries of their situation, caused them to be looked upon as people of a superior sort. Country neighbour who happened to enter their family-room at the dinner hour were surprised to find them all—father, brothers, sisters—sitting with a book in one hand, while they used their spoons with the other." On the removal of the family to Mossgiel farm, where Robert Burns, on the death of his father, had to bear the burden of responsibility, his youngest sister, Isobel, was twelve years his junior. Between the two a strong bond of affinity seems to have been formed. "I can never forget my brother," she long afterwards said. "I was just twelve when my father was taken away, and Robert was both father and brother to me." During the four years which the poet spent under the family roof at Mossgiel, before going to Ellisland in 1788, "his sister was deeply interested in his poetic flights. She was much in his confidence, and being gifted with considerable musical taste and a sweet voice, he frequently utilised her services by causing her to sing over to him the songs he was engaged in composing. She was also in the habit of making herself familiar with the other effusions on which he was at this period exercising his poetic fancy. In her old age she used often to relate how the poet was in the habit of hurrying through his midday meal at Mossgiel in order that he might, before resuming his afternoon's work, commit to writing in the privacy of his own and his brother Gilbert's sleeping apartment—an attic room

above the kitchen—the verses which his fancy had suggested during his outdoor labours in the earlier part of the day. These were generally written on a slate, and in his absence his young sister was in the habit of stealing up to his room and greedily devouring her brother's poetic fancies from day to day." Hers was probably the first eye which discerned the glow of the rising luminary, as "alike from her own poetic temperament and her natural discrimination of taste, she was peculiarly fitted to appreciate at their true value the richness and beauty of sentiment breathed in her brother's early 'woodnotes wild.'" We quote from the book:—

"Mrs. Begg, too, used to relate with much enjoyment a domestic incident at Lochlea which revealed her father and his gifted son in a very real and characteristic light. In the winter of 1781-82, while Burns was paying court to the earliest of his many successive divinities, Ellison Begbie, who lived on the banks of Cessnock, about two miles from Lochlea, his father became naturally alarmed at the lateness of the hour at which his son occasionally returned home. In order to administer a fitting rebuke to his son, the father one night insisted on sitting up for him. When, therefore, the youthful bard at length appeared, he found his father in waiting, and in his severest admonitory mood. On being asked the reason for his detention to such a late hour, the son began at once to give his father so humorous and fanciful a description of his experiences and difficulties in his journey homewards, that the old man became interested and amused by the recital, and not only forgot entirely the intended rebuke, but actually continued sitting at the side of the kitchen fire for two hours longer enjoying his son's fascinating conversation."

"Mrs. Begg's recollections of her mother were, like those which she fondly treasured of her father, fraught with the deepest filial reverence and affection, although they were of a somewhat less idealistic character. . . . One incident illustrative of her mother's devotion as a wife, as well as of her natural energy of character, she used to relate with much feeling. It occurred after her father's naturally vigorous constitution had begun to be weakened by the gradual approach of the

illness which cut him off. Coming in one day weary and exhausted from sowing, he found he had used up all his thrashed-out grain, and was desirous to provide some for his horses' midday 'feed.' His worthy helpmate, however, insisted that he should refresh himself with a rest, while she herself proceeded to the barn, accompanied by her servant girl, Lizzie Paton, and, vigorously wielding the flail, thrashed out and winnowed as much grain as was required."

In 1793, six years after the poet had left the paternal roof, Isobel was married to John Begg, a young farmer in the parish of Sorn. Receiving an appointment in 1810 as factor to Mr. Hope Vere, of Blackwood, in Lanarkshire, he settled down there with his young family of nine children, in comfortable circumstances; but, unfortunately, he was killed in 1813 by an accidental fall from his horse. By this sad event Mrs. Begg found herself a widow with a large family entirely dependent upon her for support. The story of her struggle to maintain them in respectability is a touching one. Two of her sons, William and Robert, became teachers. She herself kept a school first at Ormiston and afterwards at Tranent, maintaining herself and family by her own honourable industry and that of her daughters, Agnes and Isabella. The memoir contains a number of interesting letters to her son Robert in Kinross, expressed in language which for grace and ease of diction and force of expression might almost have flowed from the pen of the poet himself. In 1842, by the efforts of Lord Houghton, Thomas Carlyle, Dr. Robert Chambers, and others, a fund was provided by the admirers of Burns, which, with the addition of a pension granted by the Queen, secured for Mrs. Begg an income sufficient to provide for the comfort of her old age. In the following year, largely through the interested efforts of Dr. R. Chambers, she and her two daughters removed to the picturesque cottage near the river Doon, not far from the poet's monument. There she lived till her death, in December 1858, with her daughters Agnes and Isabella, the last fifteen years of her life being brightened by much domestic happiness, and by the pleasing society of many warm and interested friends. By these and

by many visitors from a distance, whom admiration for Burns attracted to Ayr, her cottage was much frequented. "Under her lowly roof she received visitors of widely differing grades, including many of the first literary men and women of the day, and not unfrequently the conversations which took place within her comfortable little parlour were as sparkling and bright as those which fancy associates with the brilliant *salons* of the titled leaders of society. Her recollections of the poet were vivid and distinct, although they were limited almost exclusively to the years of her youth."

She was gifted with a wonderful power of memory, and was able to repeat with unerring accuracy not only her brother's best known poems, but also many favourite selections from the other poets. Of her numerous stories for children, there was none in more frequent request than a fable which she used to relate illustrative of the numerous and varied lures which bestrew life's pathway. This fable she first learned by hearing it recited by the poet to his younger brothers and sisters at the fireside of Lochlea during the long winter evenings, and her firm conviction was that it was composed by Burns for the amusement of herself and the other juvenile members of her father's household. As such the little story is here given at full length, as it discloses Burns's genius in a novel but not the less deeply interesting and fascinating aspect. The story has already appeared in Chambers's "*Nursery Rhymes of Scotland*," as written down by the genial and talented author from Mrs. Begg's recital. It was also published many years ago as a Christmas story for children, with a series of excellent illustrations, by "J. B." a then youthful artist, son of Mrs. Hugh Blackburn; and as Burns' authorship has never been disputed, and no trace of the story has been found outside the Burns family circle, it may now be safely assumed that Mrs. Begg was correct in her conviction. Indeed, the very phraseology of the story seems of itself to indicate its authorship.

MARRIAGE OF ROBIN REDBREAST AND JENNY WREN.

"There was an auld gray Poussie Baudrons,  
and she gaed awa' down by a water side, and



there she saw a wee Robin Redbreast happin' on a brier; and Poussie Baudrons says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this good Yule morning.' And Poussie Baudrons says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll let you see a bonny white ring round my neck.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! gray Poussie Baudrons; na, na! ye worry't the wee mousie, but ye'se no worry me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to a fail fauld-dike, and there he saw a gray greedy gled sitting. And the gray greedy gled says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this gude Yule morning.' And gray greedy gled says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll let ye see a bonny feather in my wing.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! gray greedy gled; na, na! Ye pookit a' the wee lintie, but ye'se no pook me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to the cleuch o' craig, and there he saw slee Tod Lowrie sitting. And slee Tod Lowrie says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this gude Yule morning.' And slee Tod Lowrie says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll let you see a bonny spot on the tap o' my tail.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! slee Tod Lowrie; na, na! Ye worry't the wee lammie, but ye'se no worry me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to a bonny burnside, and there he saw a wee callant sitting. And the wee callant says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this gude Yule morning.' And the wee callant says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll gie you a wheen grand moolins out o' my pouch.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! wee callant; na, na! Ye speldert the gowdspink, but ye'se no spelder me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to the king, and there he sat on a winnock sole and sang the king a bonny sang. And the king says to the queen, 'What'll we gie to wee Robin for singing us this bonny sang?' And the queen says to the king, 'I think we'll gie him the wee wran to be his wife.' So wee Robin and the wee wran were married, and the king and the queen and a' the court danced at the waddin':

syne he flew awa' hame to his ain waterside, and happit on a brier."

"With all Mrs. Begg's love for children, her treatment of them never failed to be characterised by that sound, practical common sense and discrimination which she invariably exhibited in other affairs of life, and her fondness was never allowed to degenerate into anything like weak or blinded indulgence.

. . . One instance of her practical views in regard to the chastisement of very young children will suffice. When her son Robert's young wife had her first child, the old lady, as early as possible, paid a lengthened visit to her son's house for the purpose of making the acquaintance of the 'highly important' little stranger, and as usual, on such interesting occasions, the bathing of the baby formed the great event of the day in the eyes of the fond mother and not less fond grandmother. One morning, while engaged in this interesting occupation, the conversation naturally turned to the punishment of young children, the young mother expressing her wonder how any mother could ever have the heart to administer chastisement for the *first* time to her child; for her part, she felt as if she could never succeed in convincing herself that the proper time had really arrived for such treatment. 'Oh, my dear,' said the practical old lady, 'you need be under no difficulty as to that. If it's really needed, ye canna err in beginning as soon as the bottom's as braid's your loof.'" We again quote:—

"Little more than a year after she had established herself in her new abode at Ayr, she was called upon to take part in the great festival of 6th August, 1844, organised for the purpose of according to the sons of Burns a national welcome to the 'Banks of the Doon.'

. . . The demonstration excited an amount of interest and enthusiasm far exceeding the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. Crowds of the poet's enthusiastic admirers, not only from all parts of Scotland, but even from England and Ireland, flocked to the 'auld clay biggin' to do homage to his genius, until, as stated in the newspapers of the day, the vast concourse of people could not be estimated at less than 80,000. Along with the sons of the poet Mrs. Begg was assigned a prominent part in the cere-



monies of the day. They occupied conspicuous positions on a platform erected for the purpose close to the now famous 'Auld Brig o' Doon,' and the vast procession, nearly a mile in length, passed in front of this platform on its way from Burns's cottage to the pavilion in which the festival was to be held. It must have been a proud and gratifying occasion to the sons of Burns, and who can doubt that it was equally, if not even more so, to his now aged sister? As she stood there at the side of her nephews, surrounded by the Earl of Eglinton, the chairman on the occasion, Professor Wilson (Christopher North), the croupier, and many other noble and distinguished men and women from all parts of the United Kingdom and the sister isle, and as she watched the interminable procession slowly file past, each individual doing homage to her brother's memory by reverently uncovering before his sons, she must have had many a deep and heart-swelling reflection. It is even probable that she may have been able to regard the stirring spectacle before her as only the practical fulfilment of the bright anticipation which had dawned upon her under the family roof tree at Mossgiel nearly sixty years previously.

"To the very last Mrs. Begg retained her clear and vigorous intelligence, and the late Dr. Robert Chambers, in compiling his edition of the poet's life and works in the years 1851 and 1852, made copious use of the interesting information she was capable of imparting in regard to the incidents and circumstances of her brother's earlier years. Not infrequently, too, he consulted her taste and judgment on points of difficulty as to the rendering and true meaning of doubtful or disputed passages in the poet's works, and he frequently transmitted to her the proof-sheets for perusal and approval, and more than once gave effect to alterations which she suggested."

Many interesting associations cluster round the little thatched cottage at Bell, near the Doon. Even after her death these associations were rather intensified than otherwise. Visitors from all parts of the world, with any or the slightest claim to an introduction, deemed it an honour to have a few words

with the nieces of Burns. It was the privilege of the writer to make their acquaintance in 1866, during a residence of several years in the neighbourhood, when he had frequent opportunities of forming a lasting friendship, which was afterwards continued by an occasional intercourse and correspondence until their death. The two sisters were endowed with remarkable memories, and could tell a story well. They conversed with great vivacity, and while they spoke thoroughly pure English to English visitors, their rich Ayrshire Doric—the language of Burns—seemed to come more naturally to their lips. Among the many distinguished persons who had visited them in their lowly cottage, they were always proud to speak of several Presidents of the United States who had so honoured them, Buchanan, Garfield, Grant, if we mistake not, being in the number. In 1872 Mr. H. M. Stanley, after his first return from Africa and his finding of Livingstone, waited upon the Misses Begg, and received from them a hearty welcome. The writer happened to be of the party, along with the late Sir Peter Coats, and remembers the great traveller afterwards expressing his satisfaction at his visit, hurried though it was. The two sisters were great favourites in the neighbourhood, the surrounding proprietors, as well as the people of Ayr, showing them every kindness. The Houldsworths, the Dicksons, the Cunninghams, the Blackburns, Sir Peter Coats, and James Baird of Cambusdoon, all evinced the warmest friendship. The latter was a particular favourite. Many a good joke they would tell of his peculiarities. Nothing seemed to delight him more than to get into their little parlour and to have a regular Scotch crack with them. Both Agnes and Isabella were strong in their attachment to "the Auld Kirk," and inclined to have pretty strong Tory notions, which a wise visitor did well not to call in question! It was not very safe to do so, if you wished to retain a high place in their good opinion. Their sympathies were thoroughly Scotch. We have a letter before us from Isabella, in which, after giving a description of an English gentleman who had been visiting her, she says, "He was so delighted with Scotland, and particularly its language, 'there

was,' he said, 'a pith in it which the English had not,' that he quite won my heart by his love for guid auld Scotland."

Another favourite was Mr. Stewart of Gearholm, nearly as good at the talking as they. It used to be remarked "that if Stewart and the Misses Begg were together in a room, no other body could possibly get in a word edgeways!" They never forgot old friends,

and would repeatedly tell of the kindness of this or that one. Dr. Robert Chalmers they held in the highest veneration for the interest he had always shown in them and their mother.

The death of Isabella Begg, in December 1886, severed the last link which united the descendants of William Burness with the district of the poet's nativity.

## XXVI.—A BURNS ANNIVERSARY ODE.

BY DUNCAN MACGREGOR CRERAR.

*Inscribed to Thomas Hunter, Esq., President of the Perth Burns Club, and Author of "Guide to Perthshire," etc., etc.*

LEAL-hearted Hunter, with delight I see  
The honour of thy Club conferred on thee.  
'Tis vested well. Warm greetings take from me.

How meet it is that Perthshire's peerless  
"Guide,"

Should o'er the Perth Burns Festival preside!  
We sons of Perthshire who are far away  
From the sweet breezes of our beauteous Tay,  
Will join in spirit, speech, and roundelay.

And o'er the broad, the deep wave-crested  
ocean,

Waft you God-speed with true, heart-felt  
devotion.

The Scot's heart thrills with gladness when  
returns

The natal day of our illustrious Burns;  
On Earth's broad surface, as on every sea,  
Is cherished his immortal memorie;  
And sterling tributes to his gift of song  
Shall aye adown the ages float along,  
And broadening, deepening, flowing like a  
river,

His name and brilliant fame shall live for  
ever.

Forget we not that in our classic shire  
He tuned mellifluously his living lyre,  
And world-known now is bonnie Ochertyre.  
The rugged Bruar, as it onward strays,  
A song of gratitude sings to his praise,  
That wood-clad now are all its banks and  
braes.

And Kenmore sweet, and our loved Taymouth  
grand,  
Were limned with splendour by his master  
hand.

In cadence with his song each birken tree  
Waves o'er the roaring Falls of steep Moness;  
The charming song did Aberfeldy bless,  
For what was then a straggling up and down,  
Is now a thriving and well-ordered town.  
Forget not, then, but cherish with regard,  
What Perthshire owes to Scotland's greatest  
Bard.

I, though an humble son of the fair shire,  
Would ask while eloquence is still afire,  
That on the score of your festivity  
The Perthshire Bards should aye remembered  
be.

They were, and are, a goodly, worthy throng,  
And soulsome are the notes of their sweet song.  
Give honour's place to her, the chaste, divine,  
Our noblest songstress, saintly Caroline.  
While human hearts can consolation feel,  
Shall live a hymn, her blest "Land o' the  
Leal."

Teach to your children dear her every page,  
And praise high Heaven for the rich heritage.

While just to all, ah! ne'er forget your own,  
List to their notes, melodious is their tone,  
Cast not at them the cold proverbial stone.  
They sing your loves, charmed scenes, themes  
new and hoary,  
Their burden ever Perthshire's fame and glory.

## XXVII.—LAMB AND BURNS.—A FEW BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

*By Dr. WILLIAM FINDLAY.*

CHARLES LAMB, in a passage of one of his delightful essays, "Imperfect Sympathies," portrays, in a vein of surpassing richness of humour, the characteristics of the Caledonian mind which, without the customary pinch of salt, are the reverse of flattering. He sets the Scottish intellect up for a target, and, in the most prodigal fashion, as if his quiver was inexhaustible, fires away like one possessed. It is splendid fun! You can see the twinkle of humour in his eye as shaft after shaft of wit glances from his bow. But if Lamb enjoys the sport, so does the reader—even the Caledonian reader. The truth is, we cannot choose but laugh with the good-natured satirist, the conceits he heaps upon us have such a comical sparkle, and are without a single drop of gall.

It is not so much that stale, old libel of his countrymen's he brings against us—that we are unable to understand a joke without a surgical operation—as that our minds are of such a highly-proper, fully clothed, correct, and perfect constitution, that nothing is ever required to be discounted from our speech, or taken for granted, hence we are totally unable to appreciate suggestiveness, rather than comprehensiveness, in the talk of others. We must be spoken to by the card or equivocation undoes all. A Scotchman's conversation, Lamb declares, "is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. An impracticable wish is more than he can conceive. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected, and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way) that I wished it were the father instead of the son—when four of them started up at once to inform me that 'that was impossible, because he was dead.'"

"Yet," he says, with charming mock-pathos, "I have been trying all my life to

like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it; but I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your 'imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which he uses;' and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him."

Poor Lamb! I wonder if, in any of those London visits to Ampton Street, Gray's Inn Lane, he ever tried to ingratiate himself with that most colossal of nineteenth century Scotchmen, Thomas Carlyle, by means of the Scottish bard, whom Carlyle himself loved so well, and had written so eloquently about only two years before becoming a denizen of Ampton Street; and if he put his foot in it through some foolish non-Caledonian whimsicality or another? Lamb's "passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns, apart altogether from his gentle and patiently heroic self, should have begot in the breast of this terrible moral censor something else than contempt. It is a lasting rebuke to both their narrownesses that Lamb and Carlyle did not understand and appreciate each other. Carlyle ought to have cherished (not caricatured) this most precious and fragile morsel of English genius, and he would have done so had he had the gift to know him. And Lamb—poor, stuttering, weak, timid, punning Lamb! had he not missed it too, would have counted it a privilege to have a place of shelter in the bosom of this big, robust, Annandale, and tender-hearted withal, Scotch man of letters.

The probability is, however, that Lamb never expressed his "passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns" in Carlyle's presence; or if he did, the likelihood is that he fared no better at his hands than at those of the



other true Scots who resented his admiration of their compatriot as a piece of presumption on his part. One could fancy Carlyle, with his prejudiced notion of Lamb, that he was a purely Cockneyish product, with an insuperable proclivity to gin, and his wit a kind of diluted insanity rather than real humour, breaking into a fit of laughter at the bare idea of such a "windle-strae o' a creat're"—such "a sorry phenomenon," to use his own words—such an "emblem of imbecility, bodily and spiritual"—thinking himself capable of appreciating a great and natural genius like this "haggis-fed" Ayrshire ploughman.

It is nevertheless a fact which cannot be laughed out of court, not even by the capacious lungs of the wise Thomas, if they ever got the chance, that Lamb admired and loved the poetry of Burns; for it is unmistakably recorded in black and white in that wondrous correspondence of his; and very touching it is to see the warm and generous allusions of this shy London scholar and essayist to the Scottish Bard, divided as he was from him by a good many things besides distance, which was considerable in the end of the last century.

In a letter to his friend, Coleridge, who was living at Bristol, and just on the threshold of his literary career—(Lamb himself would only be about twenty-one years of age)—in a letter to Coleridge written sometime between the end of May and beginning of June, 1796, and about the time Burns would be staying at Brow in search of that health which he was never to find, Lamb says, in criticism of an extract from the "Religious Musings," "That is a capital line in your sixth number:

'This dark, frieze-coated, teeth-chattering month.'

They are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughed-up daisy you seem to have had in mind." And he is not so far astray in his notion.

A little later, December 10th, 1796, after Burns had been some five months in his grave, he is writing to his friend Coleridge again. Like the young peasant poet in the "Vision" he is in a despondent mood through home and other troubles; has sworn to have nothing more to do with poetry, and taken to the burning of manuscript. He had

written, indeed, only a few days before in a similar strain, "at length I have done with verse making," and Coleridge had remonstrated with him in the interval in the following, among other, lines:—

"But take thou heed;  
For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed boy,  
And I have arrows mystically dipt,  
Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns dead?  
And shall he die unwept, and sink to earth  
'Without the meed of one melodious tear?'  
Thy Burns, and Nature's own beloved bard,  
Who to the 'Illustrious of his native land  
So properly did look for patronage,'  
Ghost of Mæcenas! hide thy blushing face!  
They snatched him from the sickle and the plough—  
To gauge ale-firkins."

"You sent me," Lamb says, continuing his letter of the 10th December, "some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when in my highly-agitated and perhaps somewhat distorted state of mind I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my verses." Further on in the same letter he says, referring doubtless to the short poem of which the above lines are a quotation, "Publish your Burns when and how you like, it will be new to me; my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles is of yours. I am jealous of your fraternising with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns, or my old favourite, Cowper."

Reverting still further on in the same letter to his uncongenial London surroundings, without the society of his friend, Coleridge, "the remembrance of which," he says, "is a blessing partly, and partly a curse;" and which society, with its "damned foolish sensibility and melancholy," his relations at home blame for all poor Charles's madness—I say, reverting to his unhappy environment, he declares, "Not a soul loves Bowles here; scarce one has heard of Burns; but few laugh at me for reading my Testament. They talk a language I understand not."

It is likewise interesting to note some remarks of his friend and biographer, Barry Cornwall, bearing on this period of his life, in which he avers to Coleridge that "Burns is the god of my idolatry, as Bowles of yours." "Posterity," remarks Barry Cornwall, "has universally joined in the preference of Lamb.



Burns, indeed, was always one of his greatest favourites. He admired and sometimes quoted a line or two from the last stanza of the 'Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn,' 'The bridegroom may forget his bride,' etc.; and I have more than once heard him repeat, in a fond tender voice, when the subject of poets or poetry came under discussion, the following beautiful lines from the Epistle to Simpson of Ochiltree:—

'The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,  
Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander,  
Adown some trotting burn's meander  
An' no think lang.'

These he would press upon the attention of any one present (chanting them aloud), and would bring down the volume of Burns, and open it, in order that the page might be impressed on the hearer's memory. Sometimes—in a way scarcely discernible—he would kiss the volume; as he would also a book by Chapman or Sir Philip Sydney, or any other which he particularly valued."

In another letter to Coleridge, February 13th, 1797, after criticising some more of his friend's poetical workmanship, he relates how, on the afternoon of the day he was writing, he had been attending the funeral of his poor old aunt. This announcement leads him into a train of reflections on mortality. "Good God," he says, "who could have foreseen all this" (by all this he means his mother's murder by the hand of his sister in a fit of insanity, his querulous, paralytic father's death, and now his aunt's), "who could have foreseen all this but four months back? I reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton when she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave than one fresh dead. Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence is gone, when all the life of life is fled, as poor Burns expresses it?"

Lamb, indeed, has shown himself to be no inconsiderable student of Burns. The poet's love for the lowest forms of created things has not escaped him. In a letter to Southey, March 20th, 1799, he tells him that his "Spider" has quite a Burnsonian flavour about it, and wonders that the Bard of Ayr-

shire never stumbled upon the subject in his lifetime. "I love this sort of poems," he says, "that open up a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophised a fly; Burns has his mouse and his louse; Coleridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein, only following, at unressembling distance, Sterne and greater Cervantes;" and why, he considers, pursuing this humorous conceit, may not Elia become a partner with Southey in the animal-poem trade, and thereby contribute to the "breaking down of the partition between us and our poor earth-born companions? If old Quarles and Wither could live again we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part."

In still another letter to Coleridge, August or September, 1800, after some gossip about his domestic arrangements, we come across this passage: "Have you seen the new edition of Burns—his posthumous works and letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume, which contains his life—very confusedly and badly written, and interspersed with dull pathological and medical discussions. It is written by a Dr. Currie. Do you know the well-meaning doctor? Alas! *ne sutor ultra crepidam.*"

Lamb, in his own humorous way, has hit off the character of Currie's life more effectively than a detailed and serious criticism would have done. There is doubtless a good big slice of truth in the witty Elia's remarks. But then, to be fair to "the well-meaning doctor," it must be remembered that he was not a professional man of letters. On the contrary, he was a physician and a scientist, resident in Liverpool, engrossed in the study of fevers and their treatment by cold affusion, and only yielded, out of his kindness of heart, after repeated solicitations from the poet's friends, to undertake the editing of his works, published ostensibly with the charitable object of providing for the widow and children. A professional man of letters, he states in his dedicatory preface, could not be found to undertake the editorship, though every endeavour was made to procure one. "The task,"

he says, "was beset with considerable difficulties, and men of established reputation naturally declined an undertaking, to the performance of which it was scarcely to be hoped that general approbation could be obtained, by any exertion of judgment or temper." Moreover, the subject itself was new and perplexing. Burns was a phenomenon which dazzled, bewildered, and puzzled. The world had not had sufficient leisure yet to see all round about him, and perhaps the "dull pathological" method was the only one open to Currie. By the time Carlyle came to write his essay on the genius and character of the poet the subject was a little better understood and its dimensions more able to be gauged.

April 26th, 1816, sixteen years after he wrote the foregoing condemnatory paragraph, we find Lamb in a letter to Wordsworth once more expressing himself on the same subject. It appears that a friend of Burns, presumably the Rev. James Gray, master of the Grammar School, Dumfries, on account of an intended republication of the Currie edition by the poet's brother, Gilbert, consulted Wordsworth as to the best mode of vindicating the reputation of the poet, which, it was alleged, had been much injured by the publication of Dr. Currie's *Life and Correspondence of Burns*. Wordsworth seems to have given Lamb a sight of his letter to his friend, for Lamb writes to Wordsworth, "the letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted—called for. The parallel of Cotton

with Burns I heartily approve. Izaak Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears."

Though this is the last written word to be found in the correspondence of Lamb relative to Burns, it shows that the passion of his early youth, toned down a little, perhaps, with age, was the same. There is something quite touching in the circumstance of Lamb and Wordsworth, in these now far off days, standing up in defence of the character of Burns—two men, not only so different from each other in many aspects of their characterization, but also so different from the Scottish Bard himself—all nerves, and fire, and feeling. And there is also something consolatory for the hearts of Burns admirers in the reflection that during the years when their beloved poet was on his trial, so to speak, this school of English lake poets and literati, of which Lamb was as good as one, clearly and enthusiastically recognised from the first the marvellous genius of the young Scottish ploughman, who had gone down into his untimely grave amid so much pious headshaking and uncharitable whispering from the "unco guid." Nor did they ever afterwards waver in their loyalty to their great inspirer and reformer, to whom, perhaps, they owed more than to any other literary influence, not even excepting Cowper's, their own emancipation from the thralldom of Pope and his highly-polished and technically-correct artificialities, back again to a realism and nature.

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### XXVIII.—BURNS' BIRTHDAY.

*From "A Sheaf of Song," by Dr. BENJAMIN F. LEGGETT.*

O ROYAL-HEARTED Robert Burns!

So tender, true, and strong!

We crown again his natal day

With loving wreath of song.

In every land, or near or far,

His gentle name is known;

His songs, far sweeping round the world,

On wings of fame have flown.

Through all the dim-aisled century

His living numbers swell,

For well the poet wrought his charm

And wove his magic spell.

To-day his words are sweeter still

On music's trembling tongue,

And all the world is greener far

Since he has lived and sung.

While on his hills the gray light dawns—

The songful day returns,

We tread again the bonnie land

So loved by Robert Burns!

What charm lies on her purple heights,

And on her meadows fair,

As in a dream we wander forth,

A sweet June day at Ayr.

The flowing waters through the town  
 The gray old arches lave,  
 And Wallace's tower stands stark and still  
 To hear the Twa Brigs rave.

There stands O'Shanter's cozy inn,  
 A refuge from the storm,  
 Where Tam so gloriously forgot  
 The wrath at home so warm?

'Mid meadow-lands of clover bloom  
 And clumps of snowy thorn,  
 Beneath the lowly thatch we stand  
 Where Bobby Burns was born!

Glad bird-songs with the sunshine come  
 To cheer the dusky gloom,  
 As though the old sweet lullaby  
 Yet lingered in the room.

Beyond is Auld Kirk Alloway,  
 All roofless save the sky,  
 Where witch-fires lighted up the dark  
 As Tam rode reeling by.

Ah, how the warlock revel rang,  
 And how the windows glowed,  
 As Tam by all the clan pursued  
 Went thundering down the road!

O, what a goblin ride was that,  
 It made the stoutest quail;  
 In sooth it saved the man his life,  
 But cost gray Meg her tail!

The Auld Brig clasps the bank of Doon—  
 The river glides away,  
 The hoof-beats of that hurried flight  
 Will ring and sound for aye.

The bonnie braes of Doon are glad  
 Through winding curves and turns,  
 And birds repeat by burn and mere  
 The name of Robert Burns!

No daisies bloom beside the way,  
 Nor star with pearl and gold,  
 The broad green belt of meadow lands  
 But still his memory hold.

His birthday 'mid the Scottish hills  
 Is glad with love and song,  
 For dear they hold his precious name,  
 And burning hate of wrong:

For high above the shams of rank,  
 Or accident of birth,  
 He set the royalty of man  
 And loved him for his worth.

So comes the poet's natal day  
 With joy and gladness in;  
 For him the pure sweet charity,  
 Which covers every sin.

Be just; speak not of wasted years,  
 But let his virtues shine;  
 Above his weak humanity  
 Was faith in the Divine!

## XXIX.—HEARTINESS OF BURNS AND SCOTCH SONG WRITERS.

BY THEODORE WATTS.

HEARTINESS and melody—the two requisites of a song which can never be dispensed with—can rarely be compassed, as it seems, by one and the same individual. In both these qualities the Elizabethan poets stand pre-eminent, though even with them the melody is not so singable as it might be made. Since their time heartiness has, perhaps, been a Scottish rather than an English endowment of the song-writer. It is difficult to imagine an Englishman writing a song like "Tullochgorum" or a song like "Maggie Lauder," where all the heartiness and impulse of the poet's mood conquer all impediments of close vowels and rugged consonantal combinations. Of Scottish song-writers Burns is, of course,

the head; for the songs of John Skinner, the heartiest song-writer that has appeared in Great Britain (not excluding Herrick), are too few in number to entitle him to be placed beside a poet so prolific in heartiness and melody as Burns. With regard to Campbell's heartiness, this is quite a different quality from the heartiness of Burns and Skinner, and is in quality English rather than Scottish, though no doubt, it is of a fine and rare strain, especially in the "Battle of the Baltic." His songs illustrate an infirmity which even the Scottish song-writers share with the English—a defective sense of that true song-warble which we get in the stornelli and rispetti of the Italian peasants.



## XXX.—HENRY MACKENZIE AND THE FIRST REVIEW OF BURNS'S POEMS.

BY JOHN D. ROSS.

HENRY MACKENZIE, author of "The Man of feeling," "The Man of the World," "Julia de Roubigné," etc., was born at Edinburgh in August, 1745. He was the son of a well known physician and received a careful and classical education. He afterwards studied law, and in 1775 went to London to study the modes of English exchequer practice. Shortly after his return to his native city he was appointed attorney for the crown in the Exchequer Court.

In 1777 he became connected with a social society which numbered among its members many of the prominent literary lights of the Scottish capital at the time. At these meetings essays were read, and these were afterwards published in a weekly paper called the *Mirror*, and later on in a similar paper called the *Lounger*. In the latter publication, on the ninth of December, 1786, Mackenzie published the first critique which had appeared on the poems of Burns—a critique which awarded the poet a great deal of praise, and served to introduce his poems to the fashionable and higher ranks of society throughout Scotland and England.

It had a somewhat lengthy title, viz.—"Surprising effects of Original Genius, exemplified in the Poetical Productions of Robert Burns, an Ayrshire Ploughman," and was as follows:—"To the feeling and susceptible there is something wonderfully pleasing in the contemplation of genius, of that supereminent reach of mind by which some men are distinguished. In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous natural objects, there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight, which expands it, as it were, beyond its usual bounds, and which, investing our nature with extraordinary honours, interests our curiosity and flatters our pride.

This divinity of genius, however, which admiration is fond to worship, is best arrayed in the darkness of distant and remote periods, and is not easily acknowledged in the present times, or in places with which we are perfectly

acquainted. Exclusive of all the deductions which envy or jealousy may sometimes be supposed to make, there is a familiarity in the near approach of persons around us, not very consistent with the lofty ideas which we wish to form of him who has led captive our imagination in the triumph of his fancy, overpowered our feelings with the tide of passion, or enlightened our reason with the investigation of hidden truths. It may be that, "in the olden time," genius had some advantages which tended to its vigour and its growth; but it is not unlikely that, even in these degenerate days, it rises much oftener than it is observed; that in "the ignorant present time" our posterity may find names which they will dignify, though we neglected, and pay to their memory those honours which their contemporaries have denied them.

There is, however, a natural, and, indeed, a fortunate vanity in trying to redress this wrong which genius is exposed to suffer. In the discovery of talents generally unknown, men are apt to indulge the same fond partiality as in all other discoveries which themselves have made; hence we have had repeated instances of painters and of poets, who have been drawn from obscure situations, and held forth to public notice and applause by the extravagant encomiums of their introducers, yet in a short time have sunk again to their former obscurity; whose merit, though perhaps somewhat neglected, did not appear much under-valued by the world, and could not support, by its own intrinsic excellence, the superior place which the enthusiasm of its patrons would have assigned it. I know not if I shall be accused of such enthusiasm and partiality when I introduce to the notice of my readers a poet of our own country, with whose writings I have lately become acquainted; but, if I am not greatly deceived, I think I may safely pronounce him a genius of no ordinary rank. The person to whom I allude is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman, whose poems were some time ago published in a country town in the west of



Scotland, with no other ambition, it would seem, than to circulate among the inhabitants of the country where he was born, to obtain a little fame from those who have heard of his talents. I hope I shall not be thought to assume too much if I endeavour to place him in a higher point of view, to call for a verdict of his country on the merit of his works, and to claim for him those honours which their excellence appear to deserve.

In mentioning the circumstances of his humble station, I mean not to rest his pretensions solely on that title or to urge the merits of his poetry when considered in relation to the lowness of his birth, and the little opportunity of improvement which his education could afford. These particulars, indeed, might excite our wonder at his productions; but his poetry, considered abstractedly, and without the apologies arising from his situation, seems to me fully entitled to command our feelings and to obtain our applause.

One bar, indeed, his birth and education have opposed to his fame—the language in which most of his poems are written. Even in Scotland the provincial dialect which Ramsay and he have used is now read with a difficulty which greatly damps the pleasure of the reader; in England it cannot be read at all, without such a constant reference to a glossary as nearly to destroy the pleasure.

Some of his productions, however, especially those of the grave style, are almost English. From one of these I shall first present my readers with an extract, in which, I think, they will discover a high tone of feeling, a power and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and the voice of a poet. 'Tis from his poem entitled "The Vision," in which the genius of his native county, Ayrshire, is thus supposed to address him:

With future hope, I oft would gaze,  
Fond on thy little early ways.  
Thy rudely caroll'd chiming phrase,  
In uncouth rhymes,  
Fired at the simple artless lays  
Of other times.

I saw thee seek the sounding shore,  
Delighted with the dashing roar;  
Or when the north his fleecy store  
Drove thro' the sky,  
I saw, grim nature's visage hoar  
Stuck thy young eye.

Or when the deep-green mantled earth  
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,  
And joy and music pouring forth  
In ev'ry grove,  
I saw thee eye the general mirth  
With boundless love.

When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,  
Called forth the reaper's rustling noise,  
I saw thee leave their evening joys,  
And lonely stalk,  
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise,  
In pensive walk.

When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,  
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,  
Those accents, graceful to thy tongue,  
Th' adorned name,  
I taught thee how to pour in song,  
To sooth thy flame.

I saw thy pulse's maddening play,  
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,  
Misled by fancy's meteor ray,  
By passion driven;  
But yet the light that led astray  
Was light from heaven.

Of strains like the above, solemn and sublime, with that rapt and inspired melancholy in which the poet lifts his eye "above this visible diurnal sphere," the poems entitled "Despondency," "The Lament," "Winter, a Dirge," and the "Invocation to Ruin," afford no less striking examples. Of the tender and the moral, specimens equally advantageous might be drawn from the elegiac verses entitled "Man was made to mourn," from "The Cottar's Saturday Night," the stanzas "To a Mouse," or those "To a Mountain Daisy," on turning it down with the plough in April, 1786. This last poem I shall insert entire, not from its superior merit, but because its length suits the bounds of my paper:

Wee, modest, crimson-tipp'd flow'r,  
Thou's met me in an evil hour,  
For I maun crush amang the stoure  
Thy slender stem;  
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,  
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,  
The bonnie lark, companion meet!  
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!  
Wi' speckl'd breast,  
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet  
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north  
Upon thy early, humble birth;  
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth  
Amid the storm,  
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth  
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,  
 High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield :  
 But though beneath the random bield  
     O' clod or stane,  
 Adorn the histie stibble-field,  
     Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,  
 Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,  
 Thou lifts thy unassuming head  
     In humble guise ;  
 But now the share uptears thy bed,  
     And low thou lies !

Such is the fate of artless maid,  
 Sweet floweret of the rural shade !  
 By love's simplicity betray'd,  
     And guileless trust,  
 Till she, like thee, all soil'd is laid  
     Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,  
 On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd !  
 Unskilled he to note the card  
     Of prudent lore.  
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,  
     And whelm him o'er !

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,  
 Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,  
 By human pride or cunning driv'n  
     To mis'ry's brink,  
 Till wrenched of every stay but heaven,  
     He, ruin'd, sink !

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,  
 That fate is thine—no distant date ;  
 Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate  
     Full on thy bloom.  
 Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight,  
     Shall be thy doom !

I have seldom met with an image more truly pastoral than that of the lark in the second stanza. Such strokes as these mark the pencil of the poet, which delineates nature with the precision of intimacy, yet with the delicate colouring of beauty and of taste. The power of genius is not less admirable in tracing the manners than in painting the scenery of nature. That intuitive glance with which a writer like Shakespeare discerns the characters of men, with which he catches the many changing lines of life, forms a sort of problem in the science of mind, of which it is easier to see the truth than to assign the cause.

Though I am far from meaning to compare our rustic bard to Shakspeare, yet whoever will read his lighter and more humorous poems, his "Dialogue of the Dogs," his

"Dedication to G—— H——, Esq," his "Epistle to a Young Friend," and "To W. S——n," will perceive with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered station, has looked upon men and manners.

Against some passages of these last mentioned poems it has been objected that they breathe a spirit of libertinism and irreligion. But, if we consider the ignorance and fanaticism of the lower class of the people in the country where these poems were written, a fanaticism of that pernicious sort which sets faith in opposition to good works, the fallacy and danger of which a mind so enlightened as our poet's could not but perceive, we shall not look upon his lighter muse as the enemy of religion (of which in several places he expresses the justest sentiments) though she has been somewhat unguarded in her ridicule of hypocrisy.

In this, as in other respects, it must be allowed that there are exceptional parts of the volume he has given to the public, which caution would have suppressed, or correction struck out ; but poets are seldom cautious, and our poet had, alas ! no friends or companions from whom correction could be obtained. When we reflect on his rank in life, the habits to which he must have been subject, and the society in which he must have mixed, we regret perhaps more than wonder that delicacy should be so often offended in perusing a volume in which there is so much to interest and please us.

Burns possesses the spirit as well as the fancy of a poet. That honest pride and independence of soul which are sometimes the muse's only dower, break forth on every occasion in his works. It may be, then, I shall wrong his feelings while I indulge my own, in calling the attention of the public to his situation and circumstances. That condition, humble as it was, in which he found content, and wooed the muse, might not be deemed uncomfortable ; but grief and misfortunes have reached him there ; and one or two of his poems hint, what I have learned from some of his countrymen, that he has been obliged to form the resolution of leaving his native land, to seek, under a West Indian clime, that shelter and support which Scotland

has denied him. But I trust means may be found to prevent this resolution from taking place; and to do my country no more than justice when I suppose her ready to stretch out her hand to cherish and retain this native poet, whose "wood-notes wild," possess so much excellence. To repair the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit, to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world; these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride."

Up to the time when the above review appeared Mackenzie and the poet had not met, but they soon became friends and continued such till the death of Burns, in 1796. The poet entertained a very high opinion of his reviewer and referred to him and his works on several occasions. Writing to Mrs. Dunlop on the tenth of April, 1790, he says, "Mackenzie has been called the Addison of the Scots, and in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt at the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour he as certainly outdoes him in the tender and the pathetic. His 'Man of Feeling' (but I am not counsel learned in the law of criticism), I estimate as the first performance in its kind I ever saw. From what book, moral or even pious, will the susceptible young mind receive impressions more congenial to humanity and kindness, generosity and benevolence; in short, more of all that ennobles the soul to herself or endears her to others—than from the simple affecting tale of poor Harley." Sir Walter Scott also had a high regard for Mackenzie and his writings and to him he dedicated the first of his great romances *Waverley*. "The time, we hope is yet distant," writes Sir Walter, "when, speaking of this author as of those with whom his genius ranks him, a biographer may with delicacy trace his personal character and peculiarities, or record the manner in which he has discharged the duties of a citizen.

"When that hour shall arrive we trust few of his contemporaries will be left to mourn him; but we can anticipate the sorrow of a later generation, when deprived of the wit

which enlivened their hours of enjoyment, the benevolence which directed and encouraged their studies, and the wisdom which instructed them in their duties to society. It is enough to say here that Mr. Mackenzie survives, venerable and venerated, as the last link of the chain which connects the Scottish literature of the present age with the period when there were giants in the land—the days of Robertson and Hume, and Smith, and Home, and Clark, and Ferguson; and that the remembrance of an era so interesting could not have been intrusted to a sounder judgment, a more correct taste, or a more tenacious memory.

"But it is as a novelist that we are now called on to consider our author's powers, and the universal and permanent popularity of his writings entitles us to rank him amongst the most distinguished of his class. His works possess the rare and invaluable property of originality, to which all other qualities are as dust in the balance; and the sources to which he resorts to excite our interest are rendered accessible by a path peculiarly his own." Besides "The Man of Feeling" and the other works already referred to, Mackenzie published a volume of translations and dramatic pieces in 1791, a life of Dr. Blacklock in 1793, and a life of John Horne, author of "Douglas," in 1812. A complete edition of his works in eight large octavo volumes was published in 1808. He died in January, 1831, at the advanced age of eighty-six.

Speaking of Mackenzie, the author of "Peter's letters," published in 1820, says "I have never seen a finer specimen, both in appearance and manners of the gentleman of the last age. In his youth he must have been a perfect model of manly beauty; and, indeed, no painter could select a more exquisite subject for his art even now. His hair combed back from his forehead, and highly powdered; his long queue, his lace ruffles, his suit of snuff-coloured cloth, cut in the old liberal way, with long flaps to his waistcoat, his high-heeled shoes, and rich stout buckles—everything was in perfect unison in all the fashion of his age."



## XXXI.—THE LATE MR. GEORGE GEBBIE.

MR. GEORGE GEBBIE, an enthusiastic Burns scholar and the editor and publisher of the finest edition of Burns's works ever issued in America, died at his home in Philadelphia, Pa., August 13, 1892. He was born at Rosemount, near Troon, on August 24, 1832, and belonged to a very old family of Scotch yeomanry, who farmed an estate called Newbyres, and which has existed for over 900 years. He attended the village school at Troon, kept by a dominie of the old school, and was considered a very bright boy, and even then showed a decided interest and predilection for literature and art.

At the age of 17 he went to London and became a dry goods clerk. In 1862 he came to America to visit his brother, Thomas Gebbie, a prominent merchant in the town of Howick, province of Quebec, Canada. In 1864 he engaged in the book business as a canvasser for Jonson, Fry & Co., of New York, and remained with them until 1866, when he started in business for himself as a retail bookseller in Philadelphia.

In 1867 he formed a partnership with

Frederic Keppel, but owing to Mr. Keppel's preference for engravings to books they separated amicably the same year.

In 1873 he associated with himself Mr. George Barrie, forming the firm of Gebbie & Barrie.

Shortly afterwards they sold out their retail book business to Robert M. Lindsay, and entered the subscription publishing business, but in 1880 Mr. Gebbie retired, selling his interest to Mr. Barrie. He then went to Europe, where he intended to remain, but his affection for his adopted country (he having become a naturalized citizen in 1869) proved so strong that in 1881 he returned and entered again into the publishing business, using the firm name of Gebbie & Co., although he was the sole member of the firm until 1891, when he admitted his eldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth, to an interest in his business.

He was married April 20, 1868, to Miss Mary Fitzgerald, a Philadelphian by birth, but at the time of her marriage a resident of Baltimore. His widow and five children, four daughters and one son, survive him.

## XXXII.—JOHN LAPRAIK, THE BARD OF MUIRKIRK.

BY THE LATE JAMES PATERSON.

FROM THE "KILMARNOCK STANDARD."

THE name of Lapraik is familiar to every reader of Burns; yet comparatively few know anything of his writings, his history, or his family. The surname—now very rare in this country—is perhaps of French origin. The family of Lekprevick or Lapraik of that ilk made a considerable figure before the reign of Robert the Bruce, and continued to flourish a long time after." The Castle of Lekprevick, now in ruins, is about a mile and a half south from Kilbride, in the country of Lanark, Robert Lekprevick was printer to James the Sixth of Scotland. He it was who first gave to the world a collected edition of the Scottish Statutes. Another production of his press is "The Actis and Deides of the illuster and vailyeand campion Schir William Wallace, of Ellerslie, imprintit at Edinburgh by Robert

Lekprevick, at the expensis of Henri Charteris; and are to be sauld in his buith, on the north side of the gait above the throne. Black letter, 4to. Anno Do. MDLXX." The only copy known to exist of this very rare edition of a popular work is in the British Museum. "The Sege of the Castle of Edinburgh" was also "imprintit be Robert Lekprevick, anno 1573." Whether or not the subject of this sketch was a descendant of the printer does not appear; nor is it known whether he was in any way connected with the ancient stock, although the scarcity now-a-days of persons of the same name makes such a presumption extremely probable.

John Lapraik, the senior of all the Ayrshire contemporaries of Burns, was born in 1727 at Laigh Dalquhram (or, as now pronounced,



Dalfram), situated on the road to Sorn, about three miles west of Muirkirk. Here his father lived before him, and the property had been in possession of the family for several generations. He was the eldest son, and by the death of his father, succeeded at an early period to the paternal inheritance. His education, though equal, if not superior, to the common range of parochial instruction at that period, was by no means classical; and as observed by himself, he had little leisure to improve his mind by extensive reading. At what period he first attempted verse it is impossible to guess, but it must have been long prior to the attempts of his youthful friend, the inimitable bard of Coila.

Lapraik married in March, 1754. He had then attained his twenty-seventh year. The object of his choice was Margaret Rankin, eldest daughter of William Rankin of Lochhead, and sister to John, the well-known "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankin." From a document (the contract of marriage) in our possession it appears that he received with his bride a dowry of one hundred pounds sterling, and that, in case of his demise, under certain contingencies she was to obtain an annuity of two hundred merks Scots. His property at this period consisted, in the words of the document, of "All and hail that eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Dalquhram, *alias* Nether Dalquhram; and all and hail the eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Upper Dalquhram, commonly called Laigh Hall; as also all and hail the eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Dalquhram, called Douglass Dalquhram, with the respective houses, biggings, yards, parts, and pendicles, and hail pertinents of the said several lands and teinds, parsonage and vinerage of the same, all lying within the parish of Muirkirk, lordship and late regality, now barony of Kylesmuir, and sheriffdom of Ayr, together with the fishing of salmon and other fishing in the water of Ayr." Besides the lands enumerated, which appear to have been considerable, Lapraik held in lease the ground and mill of Muirsmill, distant from Dalfram about half-a-mile; and for some years subsequent to his marriage he enjoyed with his "wedded wife" that degree of happiness which competence and affection were so well

calculated to afford. Possessed of a cheerful, kind disposition, few men were more beloved in his sphere or better fitted for the reciprocal interchange of social life. Fond of poetry and song, he essayed the rustic lyre; and happy in his household, its strings were alone attuned for the domestic hearth. Little did he dream that the muse thus wooed in prosperity should, at no distant period, become the solace of his misfortune!

Among the earliest of the poet's griefs was the death of his wife, soon after the birth of her fifth child. This was indeed a severe stroke, and not less keenly felt. The blank in the domestic circle was supplied, however, a few years afterwards (1766) in the person of Janet Anderson of Lightshaw, the name of a neighbouring farm possessed by her father. Janet was fourteen years his junior, and a young woman in every respect capable of inspiring the poet with the most ardent affection.

"Ye gods! who reside in the regions above,  
Deprive me of life, or inspire *her* with love!  
Make Jenny's fond bosom to feel for my pain,  
That I may sweet peace and contentment regain."

The gods were propitious—

"She smiled sweetly on me, and gave me her hand,  
And with blushes did own she was at my command:  
Transported with joy, while she lean'd on my breast,  
I thanked the kind gods who had heard my request:  
So I to all sorrows and cares bid farewell—  
While Jenny does love me no care I can feel."

When Lapraik thus expressed himself he was secure in his property of Dalfram, and, though not a wealthy laird, could scarcely have imagined that the day of adversity was so near at hand.

In November, 1769, about four years after the consummation of his second marriage, the Ayr bank was established, under the designation of Douglas, Heron & Co., with a capital of £150,000, and numbering among its shareholders some of the most wealthy and influential men in the country, the concern began business under the happiest auspices and with the fairest prospects of success. Its career, however, was short and its effects ruinous. In the History of Banking scarcely an instance is to be found of greater mismanagement. In little more than two years the company was under the necessity of suspending payments (June, 1772), and though

a farther advance was at that time obtained from the proprietors, the bank finally closed its transactions on the 12th of August, 1773, having thus scarcely completed three full years from the date of its commencement. Many families of Ayrshire were buried in the fall of Douglas, Heron & Co., and among these, unhappily, was the laird of Dalfram. "In an evil hour," says Cunningham, "when the love of making 'meikle mair' came upon him, he *purchased shares* in what Burns called 'that villanous bubble the Ayr Bank,' and was involved in its ruin." Though true in the main particular, this is not altogether a correct statement. Lapraik, we believe, never was a shareholder; but what was equally ruinous, he became a victim to the mania for speculation created by the lavish credits of the bank. He not only obtained discounts himself, but guaranteed others to a heavy amount, and when the "bubble burst" he found himself involved beyond the possibility of extrication. A poem written apparently at this juncture or shortly afterwards, embodies the author's sentiments, somewhat quaintly expressed, relative to the Douglas and Heron Bank and the wide-spread ruin occasioned by its fall :—

"In the year sixty-nine and seventy  
Notes amongst us were too plenty;  
We took our glass and were right canty,  
And little thought  
That plenty, when 'tis misimproven,  
Brings men to nought.

The cry went through from 'pole to pole,'  
There's credit here for every soul;  
If he's well back'd, without control,  
He shall have money:  
'Tis bitter sauce to each one now  
That then was honey.

This credit went o'er all the country;  
It was as ready as *King's bounty*;  
But now there is not one of twenty  
That can get rest;  
*Hornings* are going every day—  
They're so opprest.

If I might pick some men by name  
Wha did contrive a dacent *scheme*,  
They're foolish fock wha these men blame,  
For their intention  
Was to make ev'ry *crown* a *found*  
By this invention.

In midst of their industrious plan  
Their money is required again.

He now is sad wha then was fain;  
The secret's kent;  
His profits he has not got in,  
And money's spent.

And then ilk creditor he has  
Comes runnin' on him wi' a blaze,  
Each telling that he must have his  
Or caution get;  
Then diligence against him goes,  
Synce he's laid flat!"

The mismanagement on the part of the company chiefly existed in the lavish manner in which their notes were thrown into circulation and the granting of loans on long credits, whereby the capital was withdrawn from the immediate use of the bank. This evil, proceeding partly from ignorance, was augmented by the circumstance of a number of adventurers having found their way into the directorship, who, at once needy and imprudent, set at defiance all the regulations of the establishment. The result was the speedy dissipation of the company's funds—the contraction of an equivalent debt especially in London, to meet the return of their notes—and a commercial panic occurring at the time, the money market suddenly became depressed, and all who were struggling for existence were speedily overwhelmed. At this crisis the desperate efforts made by the sale of redeemable annuities plunged the company into still further difficulties, and the attempt to save the concern from *legal* bankruptcy ended a few months afterwards in a *voluntary* one, the evils of which were considerably augmented by the very means adopted to avoid such an alternative. It now became a matter of necessity on the part of the company to realise every available debt; hence the *hornings* and *diligence* alluded to by Lapraik.

In consequence of approaching difficulties the poet let his own lands of Dalfram and retired to Muirsmill, where he remained for a few years. From thence he removed to Netherwood, a farm on the water of Greenoak, still retaining the lease of the mill, however, and here he continued for nine years, struggling in vain to overcome the losses he had sustained. At the end of that period he sold off his property and again returned to Muirsmill, but the sale of his lands having failed to rid him of his liabilities, he still found

himself the victim of legal prosecution, and at length, to heap the full measure of wretchedness on the devoted head of an unfortunate but honest man, he was thrown into prison. In his preface to his book of poems Lapraik alludes to this event in the following words:—"In consequence of misfortunes and disappointments he (the author) was, some years ago, torn from his ordinary way of life and shut up in retirement, which he found at first painful and disagreeable. Imagining, however, that he had a kind of turn for rhyming, in order to support his solitude he set himself to compose the following pieces," etc. While immured within the walls of Ayr jail he is said to have written the very feeling lyric, "When I upon thy bosom lean," addressed to his wife:—

"When I upon thy bosom lean  
Enraptured I do call thee mine;  
I glory in those sacred ties  
That made us one who once were twain.  
A mutual flame inspires us both—  
The tender look, the melting kiss;  
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,  
Some sweet sensation new will rise.

Have I a wish? 'tis all for thee;  
I know thy wish is me to please;  
Our moments pass so smooth away  
That numbers on us look and gaze.  
Well pleased to see our happy days,  
They bid us live and still love on;  
And if some cares shall chance to rise,  
Thy bosom still shall be my home.

I'll lull me there and take my rest;  
And if that aught disturb my fair,  
I'll bid her laugh her cares all out,  
And beg her not to drop a tear.  
Have I a joy? 'tis all her own;  
Her heart and mine are all the same;  
They're like the woodbine round the tree,  
That's twined till death shall us disjoin."

This song appeared in Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, with more of a Scottish dress and considerably improved, we should suppose, by the hand of Burns. The above is copied verbatim from Lapraik's volume. The other version is as follows:—

"When I upon thy bosom lean,  
And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,  
I glory in the sacred ties  
That made us ane wha ance were twain  
A mutual flame inspires us baith—  
The tender look, the melting kiss;  
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,  
But only gie us change o' bliss.

Hae I a wish? it's a' for thee;  
I ken thy wish is me to please;  
Our moments pass sae smooth away  
That numbers on us look and gaze.  
Weel pleas'd they see our happy days,  
Nor Envy's sel' finds aught to blame;  
And aye when weary cares arise,  
Thy bosom still shall be my hame.

I'll lay me there and tak' my rest;  
And if that aught disturb my dear,  
I'll bid her laugh her cares away,  
And beg her not to drap a tear.  
Hae I a joy? it's a' her ain;  
United still her heart and mine;  
They're like the woodbine round the tree,  
That's twined till death shall them disjoin."

It was this song, first heard at a country rockin', that induced Burns to open a correspondence with the author, which he did in his "Epistle to J. Lapraik, an Old Scottish Bard," dated 1st April, 1785:—

"On fasten-een we had a rockin'  
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin'  
An' there was muckle fun an' yokin'  
Ye needna doubt;  
At length we had a hearty yokin'  
At sang about,

There was ae sang among the rest,  
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,  
That some kind husband had address  
To some sweet wife;  
It thrill'd the heart-strings through the breast,  
A' to the life."

The epistles of Burns to Lapraik are well known. His advances, as an "unknown frien," were met upon the part of the Bard of Muirkirk by that openness and warmth of feeling which were the characteristics of the unfortunate but still facetious miller of Muirsmill. "The reply of Lapraik," says Allan Cunningham, "has been recorded; it was in its nature pleasing, and drew from the Bard of Mossgiel a second epistle, in which he says much of his toils and his musings." Cunningham has not stated *where* the reply is recorded. Assuredly not in Lapraik's volume; nor in any of the editions of the works of Burns. That the correspondence, however, was carried on for some time is evident. One of Lapraik's sons, James, recollected having been the bearer of several communications betwixt his father and Burns, who was then at Mossgiel. On the first occasion, he found the bard in a field engaged in sowing corn. "I'm no sure if I ken the han'," said Burns, as he



took possession of the letter; but no sooner had he glanced at its contents, than unconsciously letting go the sheet containing the grain, it was not till he had finished reading that he discovered the loss he had sustained.

There are three epistles by Burns to Lapraik preserved. Two were published in his first and second editions, and the third appeared for the first time in Cromek's *Reliques of Burns*, from the poet's book of MSS. It is to be regretted that the epistles of Lapraik are not preserved. Though probably possessed of no intrinsic merit, they would have served to illustrate those of Burns, and have gratified that curiosity which the want of them cannot fail to create. Burns in his first epistle proposed a meeting at Mauchline—

"But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,  
I should be proud to meet you there;  
We'se gie ae nicht's discharge to care  
If we foregather,  
An' hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware  
Wi' ane anither."

The poets met as proposed; and, though we have no record of the night's proceedings, imagination will be at no loss to fill up the blank. That it had been agreeable, and such as to excite the desire of greater intimacy, may be inferred from the third letter of Burns (September 13, 1785), in which he promises that—

"If the beast and branks be spared  
Till kye be gaun without the herd,  
An' a' the vittil in the yard,  
An theekit richt,  
I mean your ingle-side to guard  
Ae Winter nicht."

"Then muse-inspirin' aquavita,  
Shall mak' us baith sae blyth and witty,  
Till ye forget ye're auld and gitty,  
An' be as canty  
As ye were nine years less than thretty,  
Sweet ane-and-twenty."

The poet, in this instance, was as good as his word. In the course of the winter he visited Lapraik at Muirsmill, where he dined, spent a merry evening, and next morning took his departure for Moss-giel.

The flattering attention paid him by Burns, and the reception which the works of that poet met from the public, had the effect of stimulating Lapraik, who, though now far advanced in years, resolved upon venturing before the world as an author. With this

view he set about wooing the muse with all the freshness of a green old age; and in 1788 appeared, from the Kilmarnock press, the works of the Poet of Muirkirk, entitled "Poems, on several occasions, by John Lapraik," 8vo, pp. 240. With the exception of the song already quoted, few of the pieces display any approach to poetic merit; still the volume is not without interest, and is now so very rare, that a few extracts, we doubt not, will prove acceptable to our readers. It is rather surprising that the volume contains none of the author's epistles to Burns, the very pieces, of all others, that would have most enchanced his work in the eyes of posterity. There is, to be sure, one epistle to the poet, but of a more recent date than their first correspondence, and is chiefly an apology for his attempting to court the muse in his old age—

"I liked the lasses unco weel,  
Langsyne when I was young,  
Which sometimes kitted up my muse,  
To write a kind love song."

Yet it never occurred to him, as he himself expresses it, to trouble the world with his "dull, insipid, thowless rhyme,"

"Till your kind muse, wi' friendly blast,  
First tooted up my fame,  
And sounded loud thro' a' the wast,  
My lang-forgotten name."

In the "Poet's Apology for Rhyming," Lapraik soliloquizes in a sensible strain—

"No satire keen shall make me rage,  
Ev'n tho' my fate were worse;  
My head's grown empty by old age.  
But not so toom's my purse!

My means and credit, fickle things,  
They both are fled and gone;  
And I my weary days maun pass  
Unheeded and unknown!

I for a feast will never fawn,  
Nor pour out my complaint;  
If *welcome's hand* is now withdrawn,  
I'll stay at home content.

I'll make my pottage, boil my kail,  
Remote and little known;  
With ink I'll black the other sheet,  
Regardless of man's frown.

I'm not so vain as to pretend  
To teach men to behave;  
Yet still am of a nobler mind  
Than ever be their slave.



I love a friend that's frank and free,  
 Who tells to me his mind ;  
 I hate to hing upon a *hank*,  
 With *hums* and *ha's* confined."

It appears that shortly before publishing his poems, the author had entertained the notion of emigrating to America. In the prospect of this, he writes the following "Farewell to his Native Country"—

"Farewell, ye dear delightful fields,  
 Where first my breath I drew !  
 Farewell, my much respected friend,  
 I bid you all adieu !  
 For other fields and other plains,  
 And other clouds and skies ;  
 For other distant, unknown scenes,  
 I must now sail the seas !

In Spring, which decks the blooming year  
 With flowers both fresh and gay,  
 I pull'd those flowers that were so fair,  
 But now I must away.  
 I wonder'd at the scene so gay,  
 With colours of such hue ;  
 In innocence I spent each day,  
 Yet bid those days adieu !

In ease I spent my youthful days ;  
 My friends they me carest ;  
 Quite free of care, in sports and plays,  
 I was supremely blest !  
 I ne'er envied the rich and great,  
 Nor did I wealth pursue ;  
 Yet now I leave my native *seat*,  
 And bid a long adieu !

When standing on yon river side,  
 Where trees and bushes grow,  
 Where Nature's deck'd in flow'ry pride,  
 And murmur'ing streams do flow,  
 I listened to the pleasing strain  
 That echo'd thro' the vale—  
 No longer here I must remain,  
 And so I bid farewell !

My native spot, on banks of *Ayr*,  
 May sweets adorn thy soil !  
 Let Nature's blooming face so fair,  
 Aye bless thee with her smile !  
 Let flow'rs of every various kind,  
 Each colour and each hue,  
 Produce such sweets as suit the mind  
 Of every friend that's true.

You friends who graced my little book,  
 And share my joy and woe,  
 May health and peace still be your lot,  
 And wealth still on you flow !  
 Your friendship I shall ne'er forget ;  
 I'll to your memory kneel !

To every friend, with aching heart  
 I bid a sad farewell !"

These quotations are probably more than sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of the reader. Though displaying little, indeed, of the genius of poetry, the productions of Lapraik are characterised by good sense and justness of observation ; and breathe so much the spirit of philanthropic independence as fairly to establish claim to the title of the "bould Lapraik, the king o' hearts," bestowed upon him by Burns. One other extract and we have done. It is—

"THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DUNDONALD'S WELCOME TO AYRSHIRE.

*July, 1787.*

Hail, great Dundonald ! wise and sage,  
 Bright ornament of this our age !  
 Thy virtues great, and god-like skill,  
 With grateful joy each heart do fill !

Each proud philosopher doth see,  
 And owns himself excell'd by thee :  
 They waste their time in dry disputes,  
 Whilst thou by practice show'st its fruits,

Men now no more need fetch from far  
 That useful article called *tar* ;  
 Great Britain's thunder now may roar  
 In dreadful claps from shore to shore !  
 With joy we see her men-of-war  
 Secured by thy matchless tar,  
 That worms in vain their force employ,  
 Their war-like bottoms to destroy.  
 With it bedaub'd, they longer last  
 Than they were sheathed with *metal cast*.  
 The furious waves may dash in vain ;  
 Their well-pitch'd sides do firm remain ;  
 Corroding Time's destructive force,  
 In ages scarce can make them worse.

Ill fortune, with redoubled blow,  
 Had long laid Ayrshire very low !  
 Her manufactures and her trade  
 Seem'd ruin'd quite, without remead ;  
 One blink of hope did scarce remain  
 That e'er she flourish would again,  
 That woeful bank, that *plague of plagues*,  
 Had fairly kick'd her off her legs.

As Phœbus with his glorious light  
 Dispers the gloomy shades of night,  
 The world that late in darkness lay,  
 Transported, hails the cheerful day ;  
 So Ayrshire lifts her drooping head,

Erewhile in gloomy darkness laid,  
And casting round her wond'ring eyes,  
Beholds Dundonald great arise ;  
And stretching forth a gen'rous hand,  
To save from death a ruin'd land !

But chief Muirkirk, a poor starved place,  
With hunger painted in its face,  
With joy may bless the happy day,  
That e'er your lordship came this way."

This address to the late Lord Dundonald, refers to a bright period in that unfortunate nobleman's history. Much given to scientific pursuits, he made various useful discoveries, and among others that of a peculiar tar, extracted from coal, found to be an excellent preventive of rot in vessels, from which our navy formerly suffered so severely, that in the course of a few months ships of the line were frequently rendered unfit for service. Lord Dundonald first obtained a patent for his discovery, and subsequently an Act of Parliament, securing it to him and his heirs for twenty years. Immediately upon procuring this, his lordship formed what was termed the "British Coal Tar Company," in which he is understood to have embarked the greater part of his fortune. Muirkirk, on account of its minerals, was selected as a suitable district for the operations of the company—ground was feued, pits sunk, and a range of buildings erected for carrying on the chemical process. The works, begun in 1785, were the following year nearly in full operation. Besides tar, the company manufactured paint, oil, salts, and magnesia ; and for a time success seemed so certain that Lord Dundonald refused an annuity of five or six thousand a year, offered him by an English company for the surrender

of his patent. Never were hopes more speedily blighted. The plan of sheathing vessels with copper having been soon after adopted, the use of Lord Dundonald's pitch for marine purposes was almost entirely superseded. The sudden close of the chief market upon which his lordship had calculated, proved ruinous to his hopes of prosperity. Notwithstanding, the works continued in operation for some time, first under the management of Admiral Keith Stewart, and latterly of John Loudon M'Adam the celebrated road-improver. The buildings are now nearly in ruins, and are partially appropriated to the use of the Iron Works, which, commencing about the year 1787, have since been carried on with increasing prosperity. Lord Dundonald was a patriotic, but speculative and unfortunate nobleman. He died at Paris, at an advanced age, on the 1st July, 1831, in great penury.

The subsequent history of Lapraik admits of little detail. About 1796, when far advanced in years, he gave up the mill, and for a year or two lived in a house which had been built for an inn at Nether Wellwood by Admiral Keith Stewart. On leaving this he removed to Muirkirk, where he opened a small public-house in a corner land leading from the main street to the church, which at the same time served as the village post-office, the venerable poet, through the kindness of his friends, having been installed into that important trust. Here he lived much respected till his death, which occurred on the 7th May, 1807, in the eightieth year of his age.

### XXXIII.—ALL ABOUT CLARINDA.

BY ROBERT FORD.

FROM THE "PEOPLE'S FRIEND."

To the question "Who was Clarinda?" there are few persons of mature growth in Scotland who would not glibly answer, "Mrs. M'Lehose." And further to this the most elementary and superficial student of Scottish poetical literature could tell that she formed a conspicuous figure among the dozen or more women who at one time or another made

havoc of the heart of the National Poet. The full and particular account of the sadly chequered and interesting career of Clarinda, however, who, according to Burns's own written statement, had "wit and wisdom more murderously fascinating than the stiletto of the Sicilian bandit or the poisoned arrow of the savage African," is common knowledge

only to the curious, who are the few. A brief sketch of the lady's career, together with a bird's-eye review of the Clarinda-Sylvander correspondence, will therefore not be unwelcome here; as nought can ever be unwelcome to Scottish readers which comes so near to the heart of Robert Burns as to treat of one whose grace and beauty and intellectual superiority evoked his unqualified admiration—one who loved him with her whole heart and soul, and was the heroine of at least two of the most vivid and tenderly passionate lyrics that came from his pen. I mean "A'e Fond Kiss" and "My Nannie's Awa"—the former a parting song in which the stanza occurs

"Had we never loved sae kindly,  
Had we never loved sae blindly,  
Never met—or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Making four lines of which Sir Walter Scott has proudly remarked, "they contain the essence of a thousand love tales."

Mrs. M'Lehose, whose maiden name was Agnes Craig, was no ordinary person, and had no ordinary antecedents. She was grandniece by her mother's side of the house of Colin M'Laurin, the celebrated mathematician and friend of Sir Isaac Newton; and he was brother of M'Laurin, the divine, at one time the minister of Luss, on Lochlomond-side, and latterly of St. David's parish in Glasgow, whose sermon "Glorying in the Cross of Christ" has been described as the most eloquent in the English language. The daughter of a Glasgow surgeon named Craig—a gentleman also of good family, which had its representatives on the judicial bench as well as in the pulpit—she was born here in April 1759—the same year, be it noted, in which the song celebrated "blast o' Jan'war' win' blew han'sel in on Robin"—Miss Craig, when only eight years old, had the misfortune to lose her mother. But she grew and prospered apace, and by the time she had reached her fifteenth birthday she was regarded as one of the beauties of the western capital, and had received the distinctive and complimentary title of "Pretty Miss Nancy." In her sixteenth year she was sent to an Edinburgh boarding-school to complete her education. But previous to this her beauty

had attracted the attention of a Mr. James M'Lehose, a law agent in Glasgow. Up to this time he had failed to obtain an introduction to her; but on learning that she was going to Edinburgh, he engaged all the seats on the stage-coach except the one which he studiously allowed to be taken for her. The opportunity thus secured of ingratiating himself in the favour of the handsome young damsel Mr. M'Lehose took the utmost pains to improve, and being possessed of an attractive person and most insinuating manners, by the time their forty miles' journey was completed he had made a very favourable impression on the young lady's mind. On her return to Glasgow, after an absence of six months, he resumed his suit, and pretty Miss Nancy Craig duly became Mrs. M'Lehose in July 1776, being then little more than seventeen years old. The union was not a happy one, and when two children had been born to them a separation ensued.

"Only a short time had elapsed," said Mrs. M'Lehose, many years afterwards, "ere I perceived, with inexpressible regret, that our dispositions, tempers, and sentiments were so totally different as to banish all hopes of happiness. Our disagreements rose to such a height, and my husband's treatment was so cruel, that it was thought advisable by my friends that a separation should take place, which accordingly followed in December 1780."

Shortly afterwards the husband, who seems to have been in no way worthy of such an amiable and attractive wife, sailed for Jamaica in the West Indies, where he held latterly the post of chief clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, and died in March 1812.

After the separation Mrs. M'Lehose with her two children returned to her father's house, where she remained till his death, which event occurred two years subsequently. She then took up her permanent residence in Edinburgh, and lived in comfortable enough circumstances on the proceeds of a life-annuity judiciously invested in her behalf by her deceased parent. Here, though comparatively a stranger, we are told, her youth, beauty, and exemplary conduct, together with the story of her domestic misfortunes, procured her many valuable and interesting friends.



In the closing months of the year 1787 the Scottish capital literally rang with the praises of the ploughman-poet. He was the local intellectual star of the period, and nightly claimed the admiration of all admirers. Everybody who was anybody was securing an introduction to him and enjoying the luxury of an evening in his company in the house of one or other of the literary savants of the city. By the good offices of a mutual friend—Miss Nimmo—it was arranged that Mrs. M'Lehose should meet the poet. They accordingly met and spent an agreeable evening together, just as the poet was preparing to leave Edinburgh, and a mutual esteem—perhaps we should say admiration—instantly sprang up between them. A second meeting was arranged; but in the interval Burns had an unlucky fall from a coach, which so bruised one of his knees that when the evening in question arrived he found himself unable to leave his room. This circumstance delayed his departure, and led to a correspondence—which each of the two parties began by signing the initials of their own names to their epistles—and, after the first few letters had passed, conducted as between “Sylvander” and “Clarinda,” the first being the counterfeited signature of the poet, and the latter that of his fair *inamorata*. How much Burns was disappointed by not being able to keep his tryst is shown by his letter of the 8th December, wherein he wrote—“I never met with a person in my life whom I more anxiously wished to meet again than yourself. To-night I was to have that very great pleasure. I was intoxicated with the idea, and if I don't see you again I shall not rest in my grave for chagrin.” Mrs. M'Lehose's reply on the same date is—“You shall *not* leave town without seeing me, if I should come along with good Miss Nimmo, and call for you. I am determined to see you.” As soon as Burns was sufficiently recovered from his accident he visited Clarinda at her own house, on Saturday the 19th January, and the result of the meeting was the intensification of their mutual regard and esteem. Indeed, it was now the utter intoxication of love between them, and the poet is ready to exclaim “Clarinda, first of your sex! if ever I am the veriest wretch on earth to forget

you! if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul—

‘ May I be lost, no eye to weep my end,  
And find no earth that's base enough to bury me.’ ”

The awkwardness of their relationship, it is fair to state, was ever present to both. Clarinda warns her admirer again and again that he is corresponding with a married woman, and how imperative it is for the fair reputation of both that reason should govern all their words and actions; from affairs of the heart she bytimes endeavours to engage the poet in concerns of the soul, but they are both hopelessly entangled in the meshes of Love's subtle net, and only the enforced departure of Burns from Edinburgh in the middle of February could make them “tear themselves asunder.”

They met only once afterwards, in 1791, but occasionally corresponded until within a short period of the poet's death, which occurred in July 1796.

Burns has been blamed by several of his biographers for his connection with Clarinda in the face of his previous engagement with Jean Armour, while others have contended that he was justified in believing that his engagement with Jean had come to an end. All we know with certainty is, that soon after his return to the country, his differences with Jean Armour and her family were speedily made up, and Jean and he forthwith became man and wife. So far as Burns was affected by it, the subsequent events fairly proved that the Sylvander-Clarinda affair was only for the moment rapturous, and once out of his sight, Clarinda was soon very much out of his mind. With the lady, however, it was markedly different. She loved the poet with a burning and imperishable love—a love which did not fade when she knew of his marriage with another—a love which did not cease when she heard of his death. In one of her warm, beautiful, and undoubtedly sincere letters we find her saying:—“Never were there two hearts formed so exactly alike as ours. Oh, let the scenes of Nature remind you of Clarinda! In winter remember the dark shades of her fate; in summer, the warmth of her friendship; in autumn, her glowing wishes to bestow plenty on all; and let spring animate you with hopes that your



friend may yet surmount the wintry blasts of life, and revive to taste a springtime of happiness. At all events, Sylvander, the storms of life will quickly pass, and 'one unbounded spring encircle all.' Love there is not a crime. I charge you to meet me there. O, God! I must lay down my pen." In her private diary, written forty years after the date of her last interview with the poet, she has this entry:—"6th December, 1831,—This day I never can forget. Parted with Robert Burns in the year 1791, never more to meet in this world. Oh, may we meet in heaven!" And Robert Chambers says:—"I have heard Clarinda, at seventy-five express the same hope to meet in another sphere the one heart that she had ever found herself able entirely to sympathize with, but which had been divided from her by such pitiless obstacles."

Subsequent to Burns's death, editor after editor of the poet's complete works—including Currie and Cunningham—endeavoured to get hold of the entire correspondence herein referred to, but Mrs. M'Lehose, long and oft, with stern resolution, refused to deliver up her replies for publication. Allan Cunningham, when preparing the last volumes of his edition of Burns, penned the lady a long and earnest request, in which he said—"Without the letters of Clarinda, the Works of Burns will be incomplete. I wish to publish them at the beginning of the eighth volume, with a short introduction, in which their scope and aim will be characterised. You will oblige me and delight your country by giving permission for this. I will do it with all due tenderness. I have a high respect for your character and talents, and wish you to reflect

that the world will in time have a full command over the letters, and that ruder hands than mine will likely deal with them." But still she would not be drawn, and many years had to elapse until the main bulk of the curious and interesting correspondence was laid bare to the public eye. Even now, it is only included in the more sumptuous and expensive of the recent editions of the poet's works, and in no single instance with so full an account of Clarinda and her relationship to Burns as is contained in this brief paper.

Mrs. M'Lehose died in 1843 having survived Burns by the long period of forty-five years. In the poet's time she lived with her two children in a tenement-house in General's Entry, Edinburgh, the position of which is now occupied by one of the Public Schools of the city. It is due to her memory to state here that once at least in the course of her unfortunate grasswidowhood, she evinced an inclination to rejoin her faithless husband, and with this purpose set sail with her children to Jamaica in the year 1792. On presenting herself there, however, Mr. M'Lehose insisted upon her immediate return, on the ground that the climate would not agree with her, and she accordingly returned in the same ship that had taken her out. Latterly in Edinburgh she lived in rather humble circumstances in a small flat in a house in the Greenside. In the last days of her life she never wearied of telling the story of her flirtation with Burns, and when showing to her cronies his faded love-letters, it has been said "she would just greet like a bairn."

Poor, loving, charming, trusting, witty, unhappy Clarinda! She loved not wisely, but too well.

#### XXXIV.—ANECDOTES OF BURNS.

CONTRIBUTED BY GEORGE SAVAGE, ESQ.

BURNS was noted among his boon companions for his wit and humour, and the anecdotes of him which fortunately have been transmitted to us show that he possessed conversational gifts of the most brilliant character. While at Moffat with Clark, the composer, the poet called for a bumper of brandy. "O! not a bumper" said the musician, "I prefer two small glasses." "Two small

glasses!" cried Burns, "You are like the lass in Kyle, she said she would rather be kissed twice bareheaded than once with her bonnet on." It is also related that Burns, hearing words of condemnation of the niggardliness of a rich man, who, after being saved from drowning, gave his gallant rescuer only a sixpence, exclaimed, "surely, friends, the gentleman is the best judge of the value of his own life."

## XXXV.—BURNS'S "DEIL."

BY JOHN MUIR.

"What news the day, Humphrey?" queried Burns as he accosted his polemical disputant. "News!" quoth the mason, "have ye no' heard that the Deil's dead? And what's mair, the supreme council o' Hell has elected a successor; and wha d'ye think he is?" "I cannot imagine," said the poet. "Od, man," said Humphrey, "by a sweeping majority they've chosen Rab Burns!"—*Anecdote.*

At the time the above conversation took place the Deil was not actually dead, although our poet had dealt him a mortal blow, and, according to authentic tradition, had even been at the trouble of digging a grave in one of his own fields in which to bury the dead carcase of his effete phantomship, so determined was he to deliver his country from the thralldom of this chimera, which for centuries before had been the dread of the people, and whose shadow had darkened the land for ages. George Gilfillan, in his life of Burns, gives this story, which is worth repeating here:—"What are you doing there?" asked the boy. 'Making a grave for the Deil,' replied Burns. 'Catch him first,' cried the boy, on which the poet exploded in convulsions of laughter. The mention of the Deil always tickled rather than terrified the author of the 'Address.'

It is true that only in a metaphorical sense can Burns be considered as the Deil's successor. The poet, as the representative of reason and well-directed intelligence, may be said to have usurped the sway of Auld Mahoun; and the success of his *coup de Satan* may be gathered from a glance at the bibliographies, which are teeming with all manner of "answers" purporting to have emanated from the expiring fiend. To the "unco guid" this famous production has always seemed the very embodiment of heterodoxy, the author of which was in very truth—

A son o' Belial, a daurin' chiel,  
Wha wrote a letter to the very deil.

With the "unco bad," on the other hand, it has been lauded to the skies as the manifesto of those who are struggling to bring about a progressive theology, and a religion untrammelled by mythological machinery.

The "Address" was written in the winter of 1785, shortly after the composition of "The Cottar's Saturday Night." The poet's

brother Gilbert, in a letter to Dr. Currie, dated from Mossgiel, April 2, 1798, gives the following brief account of its origin:—

"It was, I think, in the winter following, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot) that the author first repeated to me the "Address to the Deil." The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have, from various quarters, of this august personage."

The most cursory study of Burns's "Address," and the numerous allusions to the Evil One scattered throughout the poetical and prose works of Burns, is sufficient to demonstrate that the popular conception of his fantastic majesty must have been an un-failing source of amusement to the poet in his jovial moods, and a most fascinating subject on which to exercise his mind in his creative moments. We say the popular conception, because Burns's Deil is essentially the vulgar black Deil of Scottish superstition, modified to meet the exigencies of eighteenth-century Scots Calvinism; and although the poem is not, perhaps, of the highest value as a work of art, charged with genuine poetry, as a rhymed exposition of the Satanical elements of Scottish ecclesiasticism it has no equal, and the closing verse is sufficient in itself to have secured immortality to any production.

It is a curious fact, for example, that although Burns, as we can see from a footnote appended to the 19th verse, had read Milton's "Paradise Lost" previous to the composition of his "Address," there is scarcely a trace of Miltonic influence in this and subsequent poems in which his sable majesty plays a part. The Puritan poet could not have influenced Burns to any appreciable extent. Milton started out with the Biblical

conception of Satan as an actual personality, a fallen angel, doomed to perdition for rebelling against the Most High. He believed as firmly in the existence of the Devil as if he had actually seen and conversed with him, which, of course, he never hoped to do. Burns, on the contrary, did not believe in the existence of the Deil. A religious man from the core to the finger-tips, he could not reconcile the two contradictory statements of a maleficent being warring against an all-powerful Deity. It was a monstrous and hideous conception of the All-Good repugnant to human reason, and one which Burns determined to do his utmost to abolish, which he has almost succeeded in doing, many thanks to him.

The Rev. Alexander Webster, of Kilmarnock, then of Aberdeen, published a very ingenious book, the popularity of which is attested by the fact that the author has in view the repartition of the third edition. In "Burns and the Kirk," which is the title of Mr. Webster's little duodecimo volume, the author formulates a theory with regard to the poems of Burns, which, although pushed too far in some respects, is remarkably fresh, original, and vigorously worked out; and in our opinion is one of the most important contributions to the study of Burns which has been made for several years. Mr. Webster has some pithy remarks, which we take the liberty of transcribing before passing on to the consideration of the poem, preparatory to a comparison of it with other poems in a similar strain selected from the works of modern European poets:—

"As one of the people, Burns knew how universal and oppressive the fear of the Devil was. When anything mysterious was experienced, the Devil was believed to be in it. When the churn or loom went out of order, it was owing to the Devil's malicious interference, when the wind blew with sudden ominous gust, making the whole house quake, it was the Devil flying past in furious rage; when the evening breeze went sighing o'er the dyke, or rustling through the hedge, it was the Devil 'bummin'; when the belated traveller saw in the moonlight some shadowy shape, and heard an 'eldritch croon,' it was the Devil; everything dark,

inexplicable, terrible, was the work of Satan, In every shadow, unfamiliar sound, pain, mishap, and death, there was something of 'the evil one.' A wild night was one in which 'a child might understand the Deil had business on his hand.' Hardly a man would go out at night in an unknown place without crossing himself or saying some protective spell. The dark side of things was the Devil's kingdom, and in presence of it the Scottish people stood in abject fear. The dread paralysed mind and limb. Superstition prevented science; free thought was sacrilege; to doubt the existence of Satan was blasphemy. Men had to drink to make themselves brave in the darkness, and the fear of the Devil actually fostered drunkenness."

Burns took a very effective way of showing the utter absurdity of the belief in the Deil. Summoning the hobgoblin to his presence, he addressed him in the most mocking style, and commenced by enumerating his different titles. Then in a rapid recital of his various deeds he brings his case to a climax in these two stanzas:—

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,  
The stars shot down wi' sklentant light,  
Wi' you, *myself*, I gat a fright,

Ayont the lough;  
Ye, like a *rash-buss*, stood in sight,  
Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,  
Each brist'ld hair stood like a stake,  
When wi' an eldritch, stoor *quaick, quaick*,

Amang the springs,  
Awa ye squatter'd like a *drake*,  
On whistling wings.

Here the *drake* spoiled everything. Had the same adventure befallen an ordinary countryman as is here narrated (autobiographically, no doubt), Auld Sandy would have got the credit of the *quaick, quaick*; but Burns, tracing effects to their natural causes, discerned in the "eldritch croon" the frightened cry of a water-fowl. The poet, unlike the majority of his countrymen at that time, did not believe that Satan could assume the form of a drake on purpose to startle an honest farmer returning home at the witch hour. It makes one almost shudder to think that our forefathers could have believed such insipid stuff, and that, too, in the name of religion.



Indeed there is more than enough evidence to show that the clergy, especially those of the Auld (dim, we should rather say) Light persuasion, to whom the Devil was an indispensable auxiliary, used every means in their power to foster these degrading beliefs.

Witness the contempt Burns has for the power of the Devil and the satanical delight he takes in taunting the dethroned monarch. He actually dares to smile in his dusky countenance, and with a roguish twinkle in his dark eye promises—

He'll turn a corner jinkin,  
An' cheat you yet.

But the worst is yet to come. The poet unconsciously braced himself with Danton's energetic and terrible maxim—*De l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace!* Having exhausted all the stores of his imagination in heaping contempt, ridicule, and derision on the poor culprit, there yet remained the shaft of love. Like a judge giving a good advice to a condemned criminal, the poet implores him to mend his ways and reform—in short, advises him not to be as black as he is painted—

But fare-you-weel, auld *Nickie-ben!*  
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!  
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
                                    Still hae a stake—  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
                                    Ev'n for your sake!

And so his sable and satanic majesty vanishes from our poet's tableau.

To those of our readers who are acquainted with the works of Edgar Allan Poe it will assist them greatly in understanding the character of Charles Baudelaire to state that he is the author of the best translation into French of the American poet's works. In many respects Baudelaire is quite as unique a personality in literary history as the author of the "Raven." He had the same fine artistic perceptions, perhaps more cultured than in Poe's case, and certainly he had a wider and better, as well as a truer, knowledge of art in its technical aspects than the American poet.

His enemies bitterly contended that there was something essentially satanical about

Baudelaire, and we confess with some show of reason. *Don Juan aux enfers*, *Danse macabre*, etc., seem to favour this theory. Indeed, the title of the first volume is in itself sufficient to substantiate the accusation. *Fleurs du Mal!* Faugh! the whole thing smells of brimstone, and I seem to feel the unhealthy warmth of Satan's hoofs as I turn over the pages of the book, and when I come to the division entitled "Revolte," and pause at page 332, on which begin, "Les Litanies de Satan," I give an involuntary shudder. This is only a passing feeling, however, and after reading the refrain—O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!—I begin to feel more at ease, as by and by the murky gloom of Hades disappears.

These Litanies of Baudelaire's are conceived and expressed with studied irony, of an iciness sufficient almost to freeze the most mercurial of readers; and the poem is as widely different from Burns' "Address" as it is possible to wish. For the benefit of the unlearned reader, even at the risk of offending the more scholarly with my rude translation, I will endeavour to give one or two of the verses an English dress. But, first of all, M. Gautier having a sensible word to offer on the subject, I translate the following passage in preference to anything of my own:—

The "Litanies de Satan," the god of wickedness and prince of the world, is one of those icy ironical pieces so familiar to the author, which we do him an injustice to attribute to his impiety. There was no impiety in the nature of Baudelaire, who firmly believed in the lofty principles (*Mathématique supérieure*) established by God from all eternity, the least violation of which is punished with cruel chastisements, not only in the present life, but in that which is to come. If he has depicted vice and shown Satan in all his pomps, it is certainly not because he has any liking for it."

Now, we rather think, with all due deference to M. Gautier's better knowledge, that he *did* like it. At least that is the impression the poem makes on us, and if we could only succeed in conveying the sense of the original to the reader, I venture to think we could win his suffrage. Take this as a specimen:—



O thou, wisest and most beautiful of Angels,  
Deceived by God and Destiny, deprived of worship,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

O exiled Prince, to whom much injury hath been  
done,

And who, though conquered, redoubtest thy strength,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Thou who knowest all, great guardian of the nether  
world,

And common healer of all human ills,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Thou who, by Death, thy old and faithful paramour,  
Begotest Hope—alluring distraction !

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Thou who givest the culprit a calm engaging look  
Which sinks into the hearts of those around the  
pillory,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Who knowest in what secret places may be found  
The precious stones a jealous God hath hid,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Whose hand upholdeth on the fearful height  
The wandering sleeper in his mad career,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Sustainer of exiles, guide of inventors ;  
Confessor of the doomed and vile malefactors,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

#### PRIÈRE.

Gloire et louange a toi, Satan, dans les hauteurs  
Du Ciel, où tu régnes, et dans les profondeurs  
De l'Enfer, où, vaincu, tu rêves en silence !  
Fais que mon âme un jour, sous l'Arbre de Science,  
Près de toi se repose, à l'heure ou sur ton front  
Comme un Temple nouveau ses rameaux s'épandront !

The Satan to whom these Litanies and Supplication are addressed, compared with Burns's flesh-and-blood Deil, is a mere shining abstraction. But we need not blame Baudelaire, or feel anyway disappointed at the result. The Scottish Deil is not the French Satan. We must judge a poet's work from the poet's point of view, and not from our point of view, or according to our preconceived notions on the subject. We must accept what Baudelaire has to give us, not because it differs from, or agrees with, Burns, or any other poet, but simply because it is his.

It were a vain hope, perhaps, to expect that these Litanies will ever occupy the place in French literature which we in Scotland, and everywhere throughout the British-speaking world, accord to Burns's "Address;" not because the latter reaches a higher level of poetic beauty and metrical art. Perhaps it is inferior in these respects to Baudelaire's. But it appeals to a constituency that must ever form the larger portion of society, and this and other reasons, such as racial idiosyncrasies and national partiality, will tend to keep aglow the fires of genius lying mouldering in the works of our great and glorious bard.

#### XXXVI.—SONNET TO BURNS.

BY RALPH SHAW.

EACH bonny gem remindeth me o' thee,  
Thee wha didst sing sae sweetly o' its blush,  
In mony a lay whose beauty's fu' as flush,  
As is the gowan's when morn doth ope her  
e'e.

I canna list unto the burnie's glee,  
Nor to the warbler's wildly carolled lay,  
Wi' na a thocht o' thee, wha wast sae gay,  
Wha poured thy soul in sic sweet melody.

Yes, Burns, in a' my ramblin' thou art nigh,  
A guid, mysterious presence, which doth  
lend

A charm to Nature, an' itsel' doth blend  
In Nature's sel'. Thou sigh'st in Nature's  
sigh,

Wi' her thou liv'st, and thou wi' her shalt  
cease,

For ye are ane, in turbulence an' peace.

## XXXVII.—BURNS AND TENNYSON.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM MINTO.

FROM THE "ABERDEEN FREE PRESS," October 18th, 1892.

My own thoughts since Tennyson's death have taken their turn from a local accident. A few weeks before, we had, as you know, put up a statue to another of the immortals, Robert Burns. At first sight there would not seem to be much in common between the two poets thus accidentally thrust together upon our minds, and the outward differences between them in their lives and their works are so sharp and pronounced that they would hardly seem to afford materials for an instructive comparison. Both were poets, one might say, and there the resemblance ends. Possibly that is so, though I think you will find in both a certain magnanimity, a largeness and strength of soul, which is one of the characteristics of true greatness. But contrasts are often instructive as well as parallels, and certain questions are inevitably forced upon us when we happen to think of two such poets as Burns and Tennyson together. How were they received when they first appeared among men? Was their greatness recognised at once? And what is the secret of the enduring fame of Burns? Why do his admirers still delight to show their love and veneration for his memory by putting up statues to him? Why do thousands every year make a pilgrimage to Ayrshire to look at the house where he was born and the scenes amidst which he lived and wrote? Though he has been dead for more than a hundred years, he is still through his verse as near and dear to his worshippers as Tennyson is to his. A hundred years hence will grateful admirers raise statues to Tennyson as they now do to Burns? Will thousands flock to Aldworth and Freshwater as they now flock to Alloway and Dumfries? What will happen a hundred years hence, we cannot of course tell; though we may entertain our fancies with the question. But what has happened is matter of history, and there was sufficient difference between the first reception of our two poets to furnish matter for reflection. I have had occasion more than once to speak and write

of the reception of Burns by his contemporaries, but I will make no apology for referring to it once more: because I know that however often I and others repeat the plain facts, crowds of people will go on believing the contrary. There is nothing more invulnerable than a well-established myth, and you will encounter many of them in the course of your studies of literary history.

## BURNS'S EARLIER EFFORTS.

It is a popular belief that because Burns died a poor gauger in Dumfries, tormented in his last hours by the bitterest pangs of poverty, his genius was not rightly appreciated in his lifetime, and that it was not till years after his death that men began to speak of him, in Carlyle's language, as "one of the most considerable men of the eighteenth century." Carlyle's account of the matter is that fine ladies and gentlemen of Edinburgh made a nine days' wonder of the Ayrshire ploughman, and then dropt him like an exhausted plaything and left him to perish miserable and neglected. That Burns died in misery is unhappily too true. His death-bed was very different from that of which you have lately been reading. It was one of the most unspeakably painful of scenes: one cannot bear to think of it. We may well believe that many of his patrons were stung with remorse when they heard how their poet died, and it has been a subject of obloquy to them ever since. The honours paid to him by his countrymen after his death may have partly been prompted by an unreasoning desire to make some amends. But who was to blame? The poet himself had far too much manliness, too much grandeur of spirit, to lay the blame on anybody but himself, and hard as we may find it to acquiesce in this, it is probably the truth. But none the less it is true that the one thing on which the poet's heart was set, the acknowledgement of his genius, was given to him by high and low, lettered and unlettered, in unstinted measure. "To the feeling and susceptible," wrote his first re-

viewer, Henry Mackenzie, in the "Lounger" of December 9, 1786, "there is something wonderfully pleasing in the contemplation of genius, of that super-eminent reach of mind by which some men are distinguished. In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous natural objects, there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight." Mackenzie went on to remark upon the difficulty of recognising genius in contemporaries, and to assert his conviction that although "the divinity of genius which admiration is found to worship, is best arrayed in the darkness of distant and remote periods," he is face to face with its true divinity in the poems of Burns. "If I am not greatly deceived, I think we may safely pronounce him a genius of no ordinary rank. The person to whom I allude is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman, whose poems were some time ago published in a country town in the west of Scotland, with no other ambition, it would seem, than to circulate among the inhabitants of the country where he was born, to obtain a little fame from those who had heard of his talents. I hope I shall not be thought to assume too much if I endeavour to place him in a higher point of view, to call for a verdict of his country on the merit of his works, and to claim for him those honours which their excellence appears to deserve." Mackenzie is most explicit in saying that while the circumstances of the Ayrshire ploughman add to the wonder of his productions, it is simply and solely on their merits, and without any plea for special indulgence, that he claims a verdict. Whoever cares to read his article will see how absurd it is to suppose that Carlyle was the first to appreciate the genius of Burns.

#### TENNYSON'S RECEPTION AS A POET.

The first reception of Alfred Tennyson by the potentates of letters was much more mixed. He had from the first admirers and backers among his personal friends, which is not to be wondered at when we take note that his first volume, published at the age of twenty, contained "Mariana in the Moated Grange." But the claims made for him by his friends, seemed to some others so extravagant by comparison with its actual achievement at that early age, that opposition was provoked.

Christopher North considered it his duty to give "the ingenious lad," as he called the young poet, an admonition with his crutch. You know the ingenious lad's retort, I dare say, though he magnanimously suppressed it in the later edition of his works:—

"You did late review my lays,

Crusty Christopher.

You did mingle blame and praise,

Rusty Christopher.

When I knew from whom it came,

I at once forgave the blame,

Musty Christopher :

I could not forgive the praise,

Fusty Christopher."

It is interesting now, when all the journals and even the churches are competing in respectful eulogy, and surviving bards, some of them, perhaps with an eye to the reversion of the laurel, are laying their graceful tributes on his hearse, to turn back and see what was said of Alfred Tennyson sixty years ago. It is only fair to Christopher, whose bones have been dust for so many years, to remember that in his day and generation, with all the whimsical extravagance of humour which has now gone out of fashion, he was one of the most generous of critics, and it is better, with a view to understanding the spirit of the praise that he mingled with the blame, to read the conclusion of his review first, lest we should be tempted by the boisterous ridicule of the opening to throw it aside in disgust. "Our critique," Christopher says, "is near its conclusion ; and, in correcting it for press, we see that its whole merit, which is great, consists in the extracts, which are, 'beautiful exceedingly.' Perhaps in the first part of our article we may have exaggerated Mr. Tennyson's not infrequent silliness, for we are apt to be carried away by the whim of the moment, and in our humorous moods, many things wear a queer look to our aged eyes which fill young pupils with tears, but we feel assured that in the second part we have not exaggerated his strength—that we have done no more than justice to his fine faculties—and that the millions who delight in *Magna* will with one voice, confirm our judgment—that Alfred Tennyson is a poet." A good deal of blame, in the case of a poet of twenty, might be forgiven in consideration of such praise as this—by all but the subject



of it. It is but just also to Christopher to notice that he quoted with marks of warm admiration, "Mariana," and "Oriana," and the "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," and that most of the pieces that he objected to were afterwards suppressed or modified by the poet. But some of the boisterous ridicule, with its old-fashioned horse-play, its rough extravagance of grinning mockery, certainly looks queer enough now in the light of Tennyson's full-blown reputation. It is easy now to read between the lines, and see what it was that roused rusty Christopher's wrath. The young poet had been praised by his friends in certain London *Reviews*, with a warmth that seemed excessive then, whatever may be thought of it now, and there was a feud between literary Edinburgh and the "Cockneys." And Christopher's ridicule was directed as much against the reviewers as the poets themselves. "One of the saddest misfortunes," he said, "that can befall a young poet is to be the pet of a coterie; and the very saddest of all, if in Cockneydom. Such has been the unlucky lot of Alfred Tennyson. He has been elevated to the throne of Little Britain, and sonnets were showered over his coronation from the most remote regions of his empire, even from Hampstead Hill," (the residence, you will remember, of Leigh Hunt, one of the Edinburgh critic's pet aversions). Again:—"The 'Englishman's Magazine' ought not to have died; for it threatened to be a very pleasant periodical. An essay 'On the Genius of Alfred Tennyson,' sent it to the grave. The superhuman—nay, supernatural—pomposity of that one paper, incapacitated the whole work for living one day longer in this unceremonious world. The solemnity with which the critic approached the object of his adoration, and the sanctity with which he laid his offerings on the shrine, were too much for our irreligious age. The essay 'On the Genius of Alfred Tennyson,' awoke a general guffaw, and it expired in convulsions. Yet the essay was exceedingly well written—as well as if it had been 'On the Genius of Sir Isaac Newton.' Therein lay the mistake. Sir Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravitation: Alfred had but written some pretty verses, and mankind were not prepared to set him among the stars.

## HIS SUBSEQUENT FAME.

But that he has genius is proved by his being at this moment alive; for had he not, he must have breathed his last under that critique." Christopher's "guffaw" sounds rather foolish now, and does not make echoes as it did in 1832. I call it back from its tomb chiefly that it may testify to the fact that even from the first Tennyson's genius had its admirers. But why not all, as in the case of Burns? Nobody disputed the greatness of the Ayrshire ploughman's genius, whatever opinions they held about the tone of some of his work. Why was there not equal unanimity about the son of the English clergyman? The answer probably is that the themes of Burns were simpler and of more universal appeal, and that his poems expressed more the strength of a many-sided personality, ranging from the rough satire of the "Holy Fair," and the broad humour of "Hallowe'en," to the touching sentiment of the "Mountain Daisy." Tennyson was a younger man, and though his mastery of verse was apparent at once, his first volume did not express his personality so fully in all the range of its powers. It was fair enough to say of much of the volume that it consisted merely of "pretty verses." The essay on his genius which moved Crusty Christopher to protest, was written by a friend, no other than Arthur Hallam, the friend whose untimely death was commemorated in "In Memoriam." His friend knew what lay behind, but this had not been revealed to the world at large. If you look at what has been written about Tennyson since his death, you will find that the grand merit claimed for him by hundreds of grateful admirers is the power of his verse to console and strengthen in the face of the great doubts and fears that perplex and disturb the estate of man. He has given voice to the spiritual troubles that thousands feel, and he has delivered to them also, in stately and majestic numbers that calm the soul as with pontifical assurance, a message of consolation and peace. But, naturally, it was not in his early manhood that he gave evidence of the bent of his genius towards such solemn themes. The first hint that he was capable of such a service to darkened and despairing humanity was in the "Two



Voices," and this was not published till 1842, twelve years after he first came before the world as a poet. Thus you will see that one reason why the genius of Tennyson did not receive from competent judges the same unqualified homage that was paid at once to the genius of Burns is to be found in the simple fact that he did not at once display the full range of his splendid powers. You will understand, I hope, that I have not raised the question of the first reception of Burns and Tennyson with any view to exalt-

ing or depreciating either of these great poets. I remember many years ago in a Union at Oxford meeting a resolution that Tennyson is our greatest poet since Milton, with an amendment to the effect that poets cannot be estimated as greater or less. And I still think there is not much good in wrangling over the reflective merits of poets, and trying to weigh them in an exact balance, when both possess in a pre-eminent degree the indescribable gift which, for want of a better name, we call poetic genius.

### XXXVIII.—BURNS AND FERGUSSON.

BY DAVID K. BROWN, TORONTO.

WHO was Fergusson and why couple his name with that of a Scottish poet, whose fame is world-wide, and whose works are known and admired even where his native dialect is as the tongue of another and unknown world? are questions that will rise to the lips of many Scotchmen, and all other readers in Canada, except the few who delight to wander amid the by-ways of literature that may be national, but is not cosmopolitan. In the noble preface to the first edition of his poems, Burns himself has given to the works of Fergusson the best introduction and recommendation they can, or could, have, when he writes: "To the glorious dawns of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he (Burns), with unaffected sincerity, declares that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions." Burns had him in his eye, when writing, rather with a view to kindle at his flame, than for servile imitation. The ploughman poet confesses that his efforts were largely inspired by Fergusson, as well as by Ramsay; and he is found writing from Irvine in 1781, "Rhyme I had given up" (on going to Irvine), "but meeting with Fergusson's Scottish poems I strung anew my wildly sounding lyre, with emulating vigour." Lockhart is of opinion that it was this accidental meeting with Fergusson's works and a personal sympathy with that poet's misfortunes that largely determined the Scottish character of Burns's writings. Sir Walter Scott, in one of his

letters, gives the impression which Burns made upon him, but what the future novelist thought of the poet is of little interest to us now, except inasmuch as it applies to his relations with Fergusson. Scott thought that Burns had twenty times the ability of Ramsay or of Fergusson, and that he talked of these poets as his models with too much humility, a humility for which Scott was at a loss to account, unless it were occasioned by Burns's "national predilection." It is much more probable that Burns had not yet, if indeed he ever, received an answer to his aspiration: "O wad some power the giftie gi'e us, to see oursel's as others see us." He was conscious of having lit his lamp at their flame; he was conscious that he had not proved a servile imitator, but he was not conscious that the world esteemed his efforts as much superior to those of his predecessors. Had Burns been capable of estimating his powers as of twenty times the magnitude of those of Fergusson—Scott's estimate—it is probable that Burns would not have spoken as he did of Fergusson's work, for the estimate which the Ayrshire ploughman had of his own writings was simply that they were the productions of one possessed of some poetic ability. Burns certainly was intensely Scotch, but he was not so Scotch as to make him believe that he esteemed what was worthless. Such national predilection would have been hypocrisy, and if there was one vice more abhorrent than another to Burns, that vice was hypocrisy.

It seems rather that Burns was a conscientious admirer of Fergusson; that he was incapable of finding fault with the work of one who had preceded himself in the task of embalming Scottish life in verse; that Burns felt much the same reverence for Fergusson that the student feels for his professor or his teacher; that, indeed, what measure of success attended the pupil's efforts was entirely due to the more fortunate circumstances in which the pupil found himself. Burns would, doubtless, have considered it presumption on his part to think that Fergusson could not have produced better verses than he, had the same subjects presented themselves to each. One cannot fail to be impressed with the absence of conceit in Burns's writings, just as one has impressed upon him at every step the contempt which the plain ploughman was capable of expressing for all and every species of humbug. But this contempt was never hurled from the standpoint of conceit—it was thrown from the level of simple worth. From this level of simple worth Burns also addressed his praise, and that, always with deference; so it is not trespassing upon the borders of the improbable, to affirm, as I have done, that Burns's admiration of Fergusson emanated from singleness of heart. The personal sympathy with Fergusson's misfortunes, alluded to by Lockhart, may have caused Burns to esteem Fergusson's works, but as the dawns of a great future, still I hardly consider it probable that Burns would have thought less of these works, as works, had Fergusson's career been other than it was. That the latter's early death exercised considerable influence on Burns, is undoubted, for did not Burns devote a portion of the proceeds of the second (or Edinburgh) edition of his poems to erecting a monument over the poet's grave? But did this influence, directly or only indirectly, manifest itself in Burns's works? Was this influence sufficiently individualized to show its presence in what Burns afterwards wrote? That is the question which now concerns us most to answer. I think that at most Burns's sympathy with Fergusson's misfortunes was but a minor passion among the many that disturbed his sensitive heart. I am not inclined to think that it was even a great or deep sympathy,

for nowhere has Burns's muse burst into song when thinking of its dead mate. Even the tombstone which Burns placed over Fergusson's grave, contains no lines other than the somewhat studied and cold—

“No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay!  
No storied urn, nor animated bust!  
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way,  
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust.”

If this were all the sympathy which was evoked from Burns by Fergusson's fate, it is not likely that the life and writings of the unfortunate poet could have exercised much influence upon his somewhat less unlucky successor, beyond the influence to which every sympathetic man is subjected by hearing of the trials and troubles of a fellow-man. There were no bands of personal friendship to draw the two together, for Fergusson was already dead one year before Burns, then a lad of scarce sixteen, with trepidation seized his pen to write, “O once I loved a bonny lass,” responsive to the feelings aroused in his breast by the charms of his female partner in the labours of the harvest. Thus the strongest influence that could be brought to bear on Burns in moulding the character of his verse was wanting; besides, as I have just shown, the character of Burns's verse was already marked when he first made acquaintance with the works of Fergusson. Summing up, then, the relation in which Burns stood to Fergusson, we see that it was simply one of sincere admiration.

This may have been Burns's estimate of his own merit alongside of that of Fergusson—but is it that of the world? No! The world knows little of Fergusson because the genius of Burns has quenched all lesser lights. He presents liberally all that can be asked for in Scottish poetry except the heroic, upon which Scott afterwards threw the light of his genius, though not to raise it to a higher standard than that of blind Harry. Those who have aimed to supply the same want which Burns satisfies have been forgotten, however able were their efforts, and however appreciated they were, until the spirit personified of Scottish poetry appeared in Robert Burns. Still there is a species of satisfaction felt in recalling forgotten words, just as there is a pleasure experienced in thinking of the story-

books that filled our young minds with wonderment; though while we dilate upon the boldness (baldness were better) of the primitive illustrations of the tales in our day, we may be gazing upon the rich art treasures spread before the young folks now to convey to them the dramatic scope of the hoary text. In proceeding, then, upon the assumption that a comparison of the effusions of Fergusson, the primitive, with Burns, the perfect, will not be altogether devoid of satisfaction to the reader, I think that it would hardly be just were I to ask for an endorsement of any judgment I may pass upon the works of Fergusson, without first making known to the reader, or reminding him, who and what the earlier poet was. It is offering no insult to the intelligence of the reader to give a short sketch of the poet, for, perhaps, his brief wanderings on the world are better known to foreigners than to his fellow-countrymen. The history of Burns is so well known that he is to all intents and purposes a living man to-day. Fergusson is of the past; let me see if I can animate the dust that is mouldering in the city of the dead in the modern Athens.

William Fergusson, the father of the poet, was of the conventional type, poor but honest. In serving an apprenticeship to a merchant in Aberdeen he discovered and cultivated with mild enthusiasm a propensity for stringing verses together. His business and poetic gifts do not seem to have procured for him much recognition in his native town. So he emigrated to Edinburgh, a journey of considerable magnitude in 1746, when the coasting vessel was the swiftest means of communication as well as the surest, (for just about this time quite a number of Highland gentlemen—being disappointed in obtaining English coronets for themselves, through the failure of the Pretender's invasion—were not averse to the humble crowns to be found in the pockets of their more cool-headed countrymen). William Fergusson did not have much satisfaction with his several masters, or perhaps his various masters did not have much satisfaction with him. At all events, the father of the subject of our sketch did not fall on his feet until he procured a situation in the office of the British Linen Company, where, perhaps, the many masters

were too busy looking after each other to have much time to look after their servants, a state of affairs which prevailed then, as now, in such concerns. William Fergusson's wife was an estimable woman whose life was bound up in the narrow, but exalted, sphere of promoting the happiness of home.

Robert Fergusson, the poet, was born on September 5th, 1750, and about all that is of interest in his family relations, is, that he was not an only son; that he had sisters, and that (perhaps owing to many of his poems being suggested by current topics), he never, by any chance, betrays the fact that he was not a Scottish Topsy, but had kith and kin like any ordinary poet. The folly of sending children to school to have their poor little noodles crammed with what to them is idle jingle, when they should be engaged in the exhilarating pursuit of compounding mud-pies, prevailed in those days, as now, and so it was matter of much concern to his father and mother that little Robert was of a constitution so delicate that he had reached six years, and his brain had not yet been tortured into retaining and repeating the ponderous rumbling noises—all that the Shorter Catechism is to a child. Doubtless, the worthy Mrs. Fergusson bemoaned with a heavy heart that "puir wee Bob," as she would call him, had not learned "What is Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification?" And, without doubt, her neighbours would bring in their wee "Jocks" and "Sandies" to repeat the "quashtions" or carritches—all, of course, for the benefit of "the bit bairn." In his sixth year Robert was put under private tuition, and so rapid was his progress that in six months he was prepared for entrance into the High School, then, as now, a school of high character. The future poet's bodily infirmities prevented regular application to his studies, but such was his natural ability, and so highly was he fired with ambition, that he managed to excel most of his competitors. When confined to the house, through illness, he developed a taste for reading, and found his chief delight in the Proverbs of Solomon—reading that will be delightful to everyone for all time, but of which a want of appreciation is decidedly manifest in these days of so-called



advanced taste. The lad, having continued four years at Edinburgh, was removed to Dundee High School, which is now of small importance as an educational institution, though it was, at that time, one of the best. Here, under the same depressing circumstances as surrounded his career at Edinburgh, Fergusson, for two years, earned marked distinction. Like most Scotch families of the middle class, that of William Fergusson had in solemn council decided that one of its members should "wag his pow i' a poopit," and Robert, being the most unlikely to give as good as he got in the turmoil of commercial life, was the one upon whom the choice fell. So, his friends being appealed to, their efforts secured for Robert a bursary at St. Andrews, where he began his university career at the age of thirteen. His natural abilities speedily commanded attention, though their scope was, perhaps, somewhat obscured by the youth's propensity for fun and frolic. At that time Dr. Wilkie was professor of Natural Philosophy, and he was attracted by the sickly lad, taking such a fancy to him, it is alleged, though without much appearance of credibility, that Robert was deputed to read the professor's prelections, when the latter was unable to occupy his chair. When he was entered as a Civis of the Divinity class, Robert seems to have begun to cultivate his muse, and with charming perversity, despising the theologians' idea of the time that the drama was a device of Satan to ruin men's souls, the first use which he is found making of his talent is to write two acts of a tragedy, entitled *William Wallace*. Perchance he excused himself from dallying with the devil's hand-maiden, on the score of patriotism, as did a friend of my own whose father caught him at similar work, and, wishing to advance some arguments against play-writing, stopped to punctuate his remarks with a broomstick; perhaps it would be more correct were I to say that he made his remarks with the broomstick, and let his want of breath supply punctuation. It is the aspiration of every Scottish youth to write a tragedy on Wallace. They do not know that incident is, after all, only the framework of a dramatic picture, and that Wallace's life does not present anything out of which to construct more than a dramatic

panorama. The aspirations of some few Scotch youths have led them on into two acts of a tragedy on this subject before their ambition became flat and unprofitable. A very few have reached five acts, but these youths died young. Robert Fergusson having stopped short at two acts, lived, but it seems that after four years, when his bursary expired, he had advanced backwards so far in his ideas about being a minister, that he decided to turn to another refuge—the law. Two years before the end of his university career, his father died, but this had no great influence upon Robert, for the last two years of his life at St. Andrews were of a piece with those during which he earned the character of being a light-headed young man. His mother was too poor to maintain him at home, and Robert was so unsettled in his habits that he could make no provision for himself. Following his restless impulse, he went to Aberdeen to see a rich uncle, who received and entertained him hospitably for six months, then turned him out of doors. The poor youth had no money and his personal appearance had become decidedly shabby. His heart burning with anger at his uncle, who had made no exercise of his influence to procure work for him, Fergusson set his face to the south, and started to walk to Edinburgh. Halting when a short distance on his way, and seizing pen and paper he sent a bitter letter to Mr. Forbes, that had the effect of drawing from the latter the offer of a few shillings, which was accepted by the poet, who excused himself in accepting the tardy aid by pleading the absolute want in which he had to undertake his long journey. Edinburgh was reached on foot, but the poor young fellow was exhausted, and was confined to bed for several days, during which his feelings found vent in writing his *Decay of Friendship*, and *Against Repining at Fortune*. Before long, Fergusson obtained a situation in the Commissary Clerk's office, but the tyranny of the deputy drove him forth into the streets once more. A considerable time elapsed before he obtained his next and last situation, one in the office of the Sheriff Clerk, where he practised until his death all he ever knew of law—transcribing law documents at so much per folio. Fergusson really did make an attempt to study law, but he aban-



done it like others illustrious in literature, among whom may be named, in passing, Tasso, Ariosto, Petrarch, Corneille, Rowe, Scott, and Dickens. Fergusson only transcribed enough to enable him to procure simple comforts, chief among which, unfortunately, was whiskey. But while applying himself with assiduity to increasing His Majesty's revenue in this way, the poet did not neglect his muse, and almost every number of *Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine* was enriched by contributions from his pen. He was speedily recognized as a man of great talent, and in the absence of men of genius, such as Scott and Burns, who came after him, was the lion of the day among that class, which then, as now, thinks that association with men of letters conceals its own illiterate conceit. From among these wealthy worshippers of what they themselves had not, Fergusson did not succeed in procuring a patron; in these days more essential for the elevation of merit to financial success than genius itself. Many there were who patronized the poor man in the worst possible way, by enticing him from the earning of his daily bread to consummating his daily death, for with pity be it said, poor Fergusson was too often snatched from sensibility by the seductive embrace of his country's Delilah—drink. As other of his finer qualities were being effaced by residence, it might be termed, in taverns, phoenix-like out of the ruins rose the strong religious principles which had been instilled into him in his youth. In the wreck of his humanity vice fought religion, and was vanquished; but alas! the man was left lifeless—Fergusson became an idiot! He was found wandering in the streets looking for the murderers of Christ. Having seen a Jew in the street, he told a friend confidentially that he was about to have the reprobate disposed of according to law. For a time he was harmless, until by injury in falling down a stair his brain was unsettled and he became a raging maniac, with few intervals of unchained repose. In these intervals his mother and his elder sister visited him, and touching, indeed, must have been the sad interviews. On the sixteenth day of October, 1774, he had a terrible paroxysm. He fell exhausted upon the straw on the floor, and there he was

found, his features in repose, and the hand outstretched towards a plaited crown of straw. Such was the end of Robert Fergusson.

That I should jog any reader's recollections of the career of Burns is unnecessary. For my present purpose what will recur to everyone of the life of the chief of Scottish poesy will be quite as fresh as the details which I have given of the poet Fergusson. They are now both known to my readers. Permit me, then, to institute a comparison between the writings of the Edinburgh scribe and the earlier works of the Ayrshire ploughman. In these poems, published in the first two editions, one may expect to find Burns kindling at the flame of Fergusson, if at any time the greater light borrowed from the lesser. Fergusson was fond of writing pastorals in the Sicilian school. The most ambitious of these was in three parts—*Morning*, *Noon*, and *Night*. It cannot be said that this pastoral makes any great impression on the reader. The conception is devoid of dramatic strength, and borrows none of the beauty of nature which it attempts to describe. In perusing it I cannot leave out of my imagination the picture of a rural school examination when two of the hopeful 'speak their piece.' Here and there one can discern beauties which are all but hidden by uncouth expression and monotonous utterance. Perhaps an idea of the commonplace character of the diction may be appreciated when it is remembered that the best lines in *Morning* are the closing ones:

*Damon*—But hush Alexis, reach your leafy shade,  
Which mantling ivy round the oak hath made;  
There we'll retire, and list the warbling note  
That flows melodious from the blackbird's throat;  
Your easy numbers shall his song inspire,  
And ev'ry warbler join the gen'ral choir.

This is easy versification, but it is not poetry, nor can it be said that the following lines from *Noon*, the best, are much, if at all, better

*Timanthes*—Ah, hapless youth! although thy early  
muse,  
Painted her semblance on thy youthful brows:  
Tho' she with laurels twin'd thy temples round,  
And in thy ear distill'd the magic sound;  
A cheerless poverty attends thy woes,  
Your song melodious unrewarded flows.

It would be labour indeed to get enthusiastic over lines like these. Even when the

poet changes from self to adoration of the Author of his being, the change of theme brings no elevation of language or of conception; as witness these lines, the best that may be culled from the third section of the pastoral *Night*.

*Amyntas*—By Him the morning darts his purple ray;  
To Him the birds their early homage pay;  
With vocal harmony the meadows ring,  
While swans in concert heav'nly praises sing.

There is nothing with which this pastoral can be contrasted in Burns's writings, for Burns never dealt in the abstract or sentimental. In everything that the Ayrshire ploughman wrote throbs a great human heart. His poetry is always passionate, never philosophically contemplative. Still, to do justice to Fergusson, his pastorals could not well be overlooked, but having glanced at one, and that the best, let it suffice. A poem of Fergusson's which must ever be of interest to those who read his works is that on "The Decay of Friendship," composed under the painful circumstances to which I have previously adverted. This poem strongly shows that the best of Fergusson's work in the English tongue hardly rises above versification. It opens thus:

"When gold, man's sacred deity did smile,  
My friends were plenty and my sorrows few;  
Mirth, love and bumpers did my hours beguile,  
And arrow'd cupids round my slumbers flew."

Another verse I may quote to show his style:

"Sweet are the waters to the parched tongue;  
Sweet are the blossoms to the wanton bee;  
Sweet to the shepherd sounds the lark's shrill song,  
But sweeter far is SOLITUDE to me."

Schoolboys have failed to earn distinction with better verses than these, though one cannot help admiring the alliterative effect in the last verse. His thought, it will be observed, is commonplace to-day, and was commonplace even when he wrote. There is a lack of energy and a forced fluency that are repellent; for, however choice may be a poet's diction, if it be lacking in life it cannot touch the soul of the reader. How different is Burns, when he tunes his lyre to lament the want of true friendship. He rises superior to a personal plaint, and speaks for the human race in *Man was made to Mourn*. In the very first verse of this remarkable poem

the reader has pictured before him the dark side of the world by the simple words, "Chill November's surly blast, made fields and forests bare," and conviction already possesses him because he is prepared to hear speak an aged man, whose face was furrowed o'er with years and crowned with hoary hair. The patriarch speaks no words of peevishness, but out of the fulness of a heart that has room for a world's grief, and charity for a world's wilfulness, he says:

"O man! while in thy early years  
How prodigal of time!  
Mis-spending all thy precious hours;  
Thy glorious youthful prime!  
Alternate follies take the sway;  
Licentious passions burn,  
Which tenfold force give Nature's law,  
That man was made to mourn."

I could wish to go fully into the difference here displayed between the two poets, but must hasten on with the observation that Burns never made his own sufferings the theme of his muse; he knew that he had himself to blame for all that overtook him, and was conscious of deserving greater retribution than fell upon him. Fergusson is oblivious to his own faults and failings, and meanders in sentimental pastoral scenes, obtruding his own wretchedness against the ripe joyousness of Nature. The one is selfish, and forces his selfishness into its most unnatural setting—a surrounding of inanimate nature; the other sinks self in humanity, is humanity's champion, and boldly stands forth in the setting which of all others gives force to his warfare—the sufferings of his friends, the people, one of the least deserving of whom he, by the mystic influence of genius, shows himself to be.

What I might term the companion poem to *The Decay of Friendship* is *Against repining at Fortune*. This is one of the best of Fergusson's English poems, but it, too, is monotonous in expression, and commonplace in thought. Towards the end of the poem one can detect a more hopeful spirit. Indeed, were it not for the last two verses, the preceding ten might almost have followed the prior poem as a sort of mild depreciation of the fancied happiness of those neglectful friends of whom he had been complaining. The two last verses are:

"Tis not in richest mines of Indian gold  
That man this jewel, happiness, can find,  
If his unfeeling breast, to virtue cold,  
Denies her entrance to his ruthless mind.  
Wealth, pomp and honour are but gaudy toys;  
Alas, how poor the pleasures they impart!  
Virtue's the sacred source of all the joys  
That claim a lasting mansion in the heart."

There is more true poetry in the last two lines than in all that precede them; still, after all, any poet, not a poetaster, has produced lines equally good. I will not cite lines of Burns to place alongside of these; to do so would be superfluous, for Burns preaches virtue as the source of joy in tones of conviction that are all arresting. A belief in virtue was taught him at his father's knee, and he could not be indebted to the "poor unfortunate Fergusson" for inspiration in his praise of virtue. I would not have touched upon these two poems of Fergusson's were it not that these, being the poems to which was attached the deepest personal interest, it might fairly be expected that had Burns really been deeply impressed by the reading of Fergusson's works, the *Decay of Friendship*, and *Against repining at Fortune*, would have given a decided bent to his writings. I may not have succeeded in showing that the two poets are diverse in their treatment of the same subject (because I have not quoted the poems in full) where diversity of treatment did not do violence to our common humanity, but my own conviction is that Burns certainly was not affected by Fergusson's writings, when he was so situated, that Burns's strongest sympathies would be lavished upon him. And if not then, when would he be?

Let us glance at Fergusson's treatment of the rivers of Scotland, and at that of Burns. Fergusson wrote an ode on *The Rivers of Scotland*; Burns on *Bruar Water*, *Bonnie Doon*, *Ayr* and *Lugar*. What a charm is in the simple ploughman's lays. As we listen to them we hear the gurgling waters kiss the pebbled shore. How stilted is Fergusson's! What a confused vision one has of Neptune, mermaids, tritons, naiads, and artificiality generally, for even his tuneful shepherd is not a rustic swain. Burns never encumbers his verse with mystic beings, who might as well not be in the scene depicted. Where

supernatural apparitions are introduced by Burns, they are already looked for by the reader, as witness the appearance of "The Sprites that o'er the Brigs of Ayr preside." I could have liked to contrast the two poets' treatment of the seasons—Fergusson, unequal, inconsequent, and apostrophizing, though at times rising to considerable dignity as when he sings:

"Mute are the plains; the shepherd pipes no more;  
The reed's forsaken, and the tender flock,  
While echo, listening to the tempest's roar,  
In silence wanders o'er the beetling rock."

Burns, at all times a living part of what he depicts, comprehensive even when his words are brief, sings:

"While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,  
And roars frae bank tae brae,  
And bird and beast in covert rest,  
And pass the heartless day.

The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,  
My griefs it seems to join,  
The leafless trees my fancy please,  
Their fate resembles mine."

Or, again, when in his introduction to *The Cottar's Saturday Night*:

"November chill blows long wi' angry sough  
The short'ning winter day is near a close:  
The miry beasts retreating frae the plough,  
The black'ning train o' craws to their repose."

Surely Burns did not borrow any descriptive inspiration from his predecessor. Fergusson has written a poem on (bed) *Bugs*, Burns on a *Louse*; but how different is their treatment of this, surely a kindred subject. Fergusson's lines are most inflated, pompous, and ponderous. He drags in Homer on the Grecian plains, the movement of the spheres, the murmuring cadence of the floods, the Dryads near Edina's walls, Pan and his rural train of shepherds and nymphs, Chloe's bosom, alabaster fair, and so on. On the contrary, Burns possesses his reader with a creeping curiosity, and at the same time deals a giant's blow at self-conceit.

Again, Burns had the faculty of making animals speak. *The Twa Dogs* and *Poor Mailie* are much more real to most men than Balaam's ass. Burns loved animals, and those who read his works speak with him to his old mare Maggie, to the "wee sleekit cow'rin' tim'rous mouse," "to the wounded



hare" and "to the waterfowl." Fergusson's nearest approach to investing animals with humanity, if I may be permitted to use such a phrase, is a fable entitled *The Peasant, the Hen, and Young Ducks*, which is so trifling that one is saved the trouble of making haste to forget it.

One would think that the wild whirl of tavern-life would have drawn from Fergusson something in which he could give expression to exuberance of spirits; in which he could reproduce what was to him the greatest excitement as well as the greatest pleasure that he could experience, but no! A cold sentimental, lifeless elegy is all that can be placed alongside Burns's *Scotch Drink* and his *Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons*. The *Daft Days*, I think one of the best of Fergusson's writings, but it is a poor substitute for the dramatic story of *Tam o' Shanter and Souter Johnny*, the cronies who "had been fou' for weeks thegither." Two verses of the *Daft Days* I shall here quote:

"Auld Reikie, thou'rt the canty hole,  
A bield for many a cauldrie soul,  
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll  
Baith warm and couth,  
While round they gar the bicker roll,  
To weet their mouth.

Fiddlers, your pins in temper fix  
And rozet weel your fiddle-sticks,  
But banish vile Italian tricks  
Frae out your quorum,  
Nor fortes wi' pianos mix,  
Gie's Tullochgorum."

There is more of the personal presence in this poem than anything that Fergusson ever wrote, and it is possessed of a vivifying power that is absent in his eclogues. It is a composition which above all others would justify one in taking whatever else Fergusson wrote as "glorious dawnsings." I have reserved, for closing, a consideration of those poems in which Fergusson is seen in his happiest vein, and towards which Burns is most closely inclined. In theme and structure there is a resemblance between Fergusson's *The Hallow Fair* and *Leith Races*, and Burns's *The H. ly Fair*, as also between Fergusson's *The Farmer's Ingle*, and Burns's *The Cottar's Saturday Night*. In the *Hallow*

*Fair* and *Leith Races*, and in the *Holy Fair*, the versification is the same, but it is a versification that was old even when Fergusson wrote, and was adopted by Burns, so far as is known, before he had ever seen any poem of Fergusson's. The versification—eight lines and a rider, "—that day"—is a modification of *Christis' Kirk of the Greene*, written by King James I., and to which Currie attributes the force and structure of most of the rural poetry, Currie making a remark, in his *Essay on Scottish Poetry*, to the effect that it is peculiar that the only nation in Europe which had an original poetry, should have had the form of its poetry handed down to its rural poets from a monarch. In Fergusson's poem on the Hallow Fair, he describes the scene at a rural fair, the chapmen selling their wares, the whisky-drinking, enlisting, fighting, and characteristic humours of such a celebration in his day. In *Leith Races* he describes meeting with a mystic being, called *Mirth*, the fairest quean "neath the lift," whose "een were o' the siller sheen, her skin like snawy drift." The two agree to go to the races, and there observe her "power and pith." They go, but in the agreement to go is seen the last of this sprite *Mirth*, Fergusson thereafter describing with great gusto the humours of the races as they appeared to him. Burns's poems is like a combination of the two by Fergusson. In early morning of the Sacramental Sunday he is sniffing the caller air, when "three huzzies cam skelpin' up the way." The two looked like twins, and "sour as ony slaes," while the third, who was behind, "came up, hap-stap-an'-loup, as light as ony lammie." With rustic grace the poet replies to the "curchie" of the taller one, who tells that her name is FUN, that the other two are SUPERSTITION and HYPOCRISY, that all three are on the way to the holy fair. The poet says that he will get his "Sunday sark on," and join her at the fair. This is the last we see of the trio, and here observe the resemblance between the structure of the poems of Fergusson. In the eighth verse Burns would seem to imply that the three damsels were there, but nothing approaching to an interchange of sentiment takes place. Burns, like Fergusson, dwells at length on the humours of



the scene, and though the subjects be different the treatment is, in a measure, similar. It will, however, be conceded, that Burns develops much greater power of description and moral intensity than Fergusson. So marked is this, that it is doing no injustice to Fergusson to say that Burns did not imitate him. It is impossible to suggest any other mode of treatment than that which both Fergusson and Burns followed, and besides it is the treatment which King James gave, or Ramsay makes him give, to *Christis' Kirk on the Grene*. While inclined to set a higher value upon Fergusson's writings than, perhaps, may stand the test of common sense, I think that it would hardly be correct to add to their lustre the reflex light of Burns's *Holy Fair*.

Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle* is a poem of very great merit, but it is essentially an effort of descriptive power, and not a heart's tribute to the dead, as was Burns's *Cottar's Saturday Night*. Fergusson described what had created admiration in him, what seemed an exceeding lovely portion of that rural life whose beauties woke response in his soul, and caused it to burst forth in song. The farmer and his "gudame" were not a father and mother upon whose memories the flowers of love and wreaths of veneration were daily showered by a son, to stay the mildest impulse of whose wayward soul a stray thought of childhood's home was potent. Burns poured his whole soul forth to do honour to his parents, and his tribute has the intensity of despair—the despair of ever being worthy of those to whom he owed all of the heavenly that in him was for ever at war with the carnal passions of his own creation. Fergusson's poem breathes so much spirit; it is essentially contemplative. Still, it appeals strongly to the fancy, if not to the heart, as witness these two verses: (Supper is supposed to be over.)

The fient a chiep's amang the bairnies now,  
For a' their anger's wi' their hunger gane;  
Ay maun the childer, wi' a fastin' mou',  
Grumble and greet, and make an unco mane.

In rangles round before the ingle's low,  
Frae Gudame's mouth auld waird tales they bear,  
O' warlocks loupin' round the worrikow,  
O' ghaists that win in glen and kirkyard dreary  
Whilk touzles a' their tap, and gars them shake wi' fear.

For weel she trows that fiends and fairies be  
Sent frae the de'il to fletch us to our ill;  
That kye hae tint their milk wi' evil e'e,  
And corn been scowder'd on the glowing kill.  
O mock nae this, my friends! but rather mourn,  
Ye in life's bravest spring, wi' reason clear,  
Wi' eild our idle fancies a' return  
And dim our dolefu' days wi' bairnly fear,  
The mind's aye cradled when the grave is near.

The closing lines of this last verse are singularly touching. Even Burns himself could not have more gracefully or compassionately described that terrible state "dotage." Burns's poem is also in Alexandrine verse, the last line being of the long measure used by Bryon with such effect in his *Address to the Ocean*, and which may be likened to the roll of the breaker following the fall of wavelets on the shore. The necessity of quoting *The Cottar's Saturday Night* to show that Burns did not in writing it kindle his genius at the flame of Fergusson's muse, is spared to me by the accepted belief that the poem is a spontaneous expression of the veneration of Burns for his parents. All are familiar with that great word-picture, in which humanity sees its heart's most heavenly pulses shrined, a picture in which Heaven is beheld on earth.

Thus far and no further do we go in our search for similarity in the writings of the two poets. Fruitless it has been, if not devoid of pleasure. What need that we persevere? Is it not daily our experience that the firmament of literature is as the firmament above us? The bright stars of the early evening pale before the moon's refulgent light, and that again is resolved, as it were, into darkness by the full glare of the sun's rays. So it is when ability fades before cultured intelligence—to fall into nothingness at the advent of genius.

## XXXIX.—THE ABERDEEN BURNS CLUB.

FROM "IRVINE HERALD," 14TH JUNE, 1889.

ALTHOUGH Robert Burns, when he passed through Aberdeen, in 1787, does not seem to have been favourably influenced by what he saw and heard (he called it "a lazy toon"), yet the good folks of Bon-Accord have never borne the Bard any grudge for his non appreciation of their personal merits and material surroundings. His poems and songs have ever held a warm place in the hearts of the dwellers in "the silver city by the sea;" and while the Aberdeen Burns Club has to be spoken of in the sense of comparatively recent birth, the years of its life as a semi private institution must not be summed up as the period during which the genius of the author of "Mary Morrison," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and "Tam O' Shanter" has obtained admiring recognition in the North. In Aberdeen, the 25th of January has long been held in loving remembrance by many poetically inclined citizens as the natal day of him

Who walked in glory and in joy,

Following his plough upon the mountain side—

though there does not seem to exist special record of anything like public celebration of the now world-wide "red-letter day" in the history of Scottish literature.

Small circles and coteries, hale, hearty fellows, doubtless there were who assembled on the return of the memorable night in January when the wind "blew hansel in on Robin," and fittingly paid tribute to his memory, sang his sweetest songs, and recited his best narrative and descriptive poems; but it was not till 1871 or 1872 that the body who are now recognised as "The Aberdeen Burns Club" first took form. They did so under very unpretentious—indeed primitive—aspirations and surroundings. Something like this:—A gentleman familiarly known in the city for his literary and musical proclivities suggested to half-a-dozen like-minded friends that they might convene for a couple of hours or so, after business, on one or other of the years mentioned, and speak about the story of Robert Burns—its lights and shadows, its beauty and its blight. The proposal was

readily accepted, and the meeting took place in a popular hostelry—the Adelphi Hotel, to wit. 'Twas a very simple, homely affair—Finnan haddocks, Portlethen crabs, with Deeside oatcakes for supper, due and needful accompaniment being added in the way of native beverage, hot or cold, as taste dictated. The following year the conference was renewed in the same place, the number of deputies now, however, being some twelve or fifteen—few but fit. On both these preliminary occasions—for such they may be justly styled—the chair was occupied by the "founder of the feast" referred to above—Mr. Wm. Carnie (best known, perhaps, as editor of "The Northern Psalter," and author of "Waifs of Rhyme"). It is from 1875 that the order of things in connection with the Club may be said to have attained anything like a formal business character. A Committee of *two* then "took matters in hand." Yes, the quoted declaration is right. A couple of the original members who could run pretty well together in harness in most movements actually "took" direction of the Club. They did not choose to wait for considerate nomination or flattering appointment. No, they had, and indeed still retain, a good conceit of themselves, and the upshot is that, during all time since 1875, the two individuals in question have, *minus* fee or reward, and as they complacently in their own wisdom believe, *sans* shortcomings in deed or document, conducted the affairs of the Aberdeen Burns Club. The habits of this "Mysterious Committee," as they are dubbed, may, in truth, be taken as a warning, or example, just as they strike persons like situated. For instance, while the membership of the Club has on and up to this present year of grace, 1889, vastly increased, no single soul, apparently, knows anything whatever regarding the position of its concerns! But now these are to see the light through the agency of the *Irvine Herald*. The majority of Burns Clubs are guided and directed pretty much by rules, regulations, etc. Rules! there are no rules

for the Aberdeen Club. The self-appointed Committee, in their superiority, recognise no such trammels. They call the annual 25th of January dinner, they draw up a toast list, they print names of speakers to give and reply, they levy assessments to pay, as they put it, "various expenses;" but they have never written or kept a solitary scrap or record in the way of minutes, and they positively decline to say how or where the money goes! The outcome of this "silent system of business" (the Committee's favourite phrase) has been that there never was a division or vote on any point or subject whatsoever, sacred or secular, in connection with the Club. The *closure* has been applied most effectively, and strange to note, accepted by the members of the Club in a manner highly creditable to forbearing human kind—not to speak of profit on the score of saving time. This important though unwritten understanding has, however, been without challenge or break observed, that the chairman for the time is always promoted from the seat of the croupier.

For at least ten years past the membership of the Aberdeen Burns Club has averaged thirty-five, and the dinner takes place by turns in the principal hotels of the city. During its existence the membership has embraced not a few of the leading spirits of the community—professional, literary, and commercial; while amongst others who have filled the office of chairman, memory pleasantly recalls the following:—The late Dr. Robert Beveridge, an able and popular "brother of the mystic tie," and esteemed magistrate of the town; Mr. William Cadenhead, author of "Flights of Fancy;" Mr. John S. Stuart, assistant railway manager; Mr. Alexander Yeats, Depute Town-Clerk; Dr. William Alexander, editor *Free Press* and author of "Johnnie Gibb of Gushetneuk"; Rev. C. C. Macdonald, St. Clement's Parish Church; Professor William Minto, Aberdeen University; Dr. Forbes M. Moir, of Tarnash; Mr. James Rettie, jeweller; Mr. William Milne, advocate; Mr. James Walker, wine merchant; Mr. Robert Cooper, shorthand writer, Sheriff Court; Mr. Robert Anderson, sub-editor *Free Press*; Mr. James Moir, rector, Grammar School; Councillor John Morgan, etc. The opinion may be ventured that

these gentleman in giving dinner, as Presidents, the standing toast "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns," fully appreciated the genius of the bard in words at once eloquent, just, and sympathetic. Yet while the speaking can be noticed as always interesting, the special and salient features of the meetings of the Aberdeen Burns Club, when the "cloth is removed," have ever been the singing and reciting of songs and poems old and new. The Club from its earliest days onward has been fortunate enough to include in its ranks the ablest resident vocalists—professional and amateur—and these gentlemen do not spare themselves, through their cultivated musical gifts, in adding to the enjoyment of their fellow-members. With almost equal warmth, too, should be recognised the efforts of the reciters—more particularly those of Mr. Cadenhead, one of the original and best beloved of the body. This gentleman is most worthily looked upon as the Laureate of the Club, for in this capacity he yearly treats the company to a fresh poem composed for the occasion, and this article may fittingly enough have for its closing lines one of the more recent contributions from his pen—a contribution which cannot but recommend itself to the readers of "Burnsiana," more especially such of them as have visited the old Globe Hotel, Dumfries:—

#### BURNS'S AULD ARM-CHAIR.

Some months ago a friend and I,  
An autumn holiday to try,  
Wandered wi' hearts to pleasure strung  
Whaur Coleridge and Wordsworth sung—  
Whaur the Lake Muses all abide  
By Rydal, Grasmere, Ambleside—  
And found our rapture still increase  
When our steps led us to Dumfries—  
Dumfries, where Burns his latest days  
Spent, singing still immortal lays;  
Dumfries, which holds his honoured dust,  
With worthy pride, in sacred trust.

We saw the Nith, and had a stray  
Among Lincluden's ruins gray;  
But chiefly sought the streets to thread  
That once rung to the poet's tread,  
Trying his homes and haunts to probe;  
And lastly landed in the "Globe,"  
That "howf" whaur mony a nicht he spent  
In sometimes doubtful merriment;  
Whaur still, graved on the window panes,  
You recognise his hand and strains;  
And in a corner, nursed with care,



Stands his accustomed old arm-chair—  
A seat you need not doubt we tried  
With awe, and somewhat kindred pride,  
For we had baith, at antrin times,  
Sought to express our thought in rhymes.

Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair,  
Doubt na but I had visions rare—  
I saw its e'e the gloaming steek  
Upon the last day o' the week ;  
And round the hearth the bairns a' gather  
By eident mother, kindly father ;  
While cheery cracks and joyous smirgle  
Gang round about the youthfu' circle  
As Jeannie's sweetheart, ill at ease,  
Praises the guidwife's weel-hained cheese—  
Syne a', I see, concludes wi' prayer,  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair.

Sittin' in Robbie Burns's chair—  
It's market day in guid auld Ayr,  
And Shanter's Tam, the hearty fouter,  
Is bousin' with the drouthy souter.  
The nicht grows dark, the thunder's roar  
Is heard aboon the sangs' and splore :  
Tam mounts, and skelpin' thro' the glaur,  
Rides heedless o' the tempest's war.  
But see ! what gleams flash thro' the mirk  
Frae ilka winnock o' the kirk !  
What legs frae cutty sarks are prancin' !  
What music, deevilry, and dancin' !  
Whiff ! at a word the vision closes :—  
Tho' joys, when stown, are sweet as roses,  
Ye'll pay, Tam, for yon temptin' glimmer ;  
She's after you, the supple limmer !  
Ply whip and spur, man !—What befell  
Poor tail-less Maggie best can tell.  
A' this I witnessed, veeve and fair,  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair.

Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair,  
A galaxy of maidens fair  
And carles and cummers licht and loom  
In ilka corner o' the room ;

Those who in warm life's-blood he knew,  
And those his potent fancy drew.  
There's Captain Grose, ye lang hae kent him,  
He's takin' notes, and haith he'll print them ;  
There's Death, wi' leister keen and fell,  
There's even auld Nickie Ben himsel' ;  
There's Willie Wastle, Duncan Gray,  
Tam Glen, and mony a hunder mae ;

And 'manng the rest,  
That stalwart ghaist,  
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be,  
Wha wore aroon his bannet bree  
The sacred poesy "Libertie."  
Awa, ye carles sae grim and hairy !  
There's dear, kind, simple Highland Mary ;  
And, glancin' wi' her lovin' een,  
Sweet, aft-neglected, constant Jean ;  
It's true, O lovely Polly Stewart,  
May flowers are nae sae sweet as thou art ;  
Wha wadna toil frae sun to sun  
For thee, dear Mary Morrison !  
Jeanie ! I'd fain thy bosom fill,  
Wha sighed sae sair wi' care an' pain,  
Fain teach thee what had made thee ill,  
And what wad mak' thee weel again.  
O, Anna wi' the gowden locks !  
Frae thee a curl I fain wad coax  
Or share—in moments bricht tho' few—  
Yon pint o' wine wi' Burns and you ;  
But I'm clean dazed wi' visions rare  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair !  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair,  
A cry of sorrow fills the air ;  
Echo takes up the utterance dread—  
"The minstrel Burns is dead—is dead !"

Up the long street the sad procession comes,  
The bugles wail, and sob the muffled drums ;  
St. Michael takes within its ancient ward  
All that is mortal of the Scottish bard—  
Sweet, faithful Jean starts 'mid her travail's tears  
As those sad volleys ring upon her ears ;  
My tears, responsive, blur the visions fair  
I had while sitting in that old arm-chair.

## XL.—THE WEST REBUKED !

BY JOHN MACFARLANE.

(Lines written on reading that the great-grand daughter of Burns, who is said to have "the poet's eyes," refused to be placed on exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair.)

IRREVERENT Age ! Irreverent West !  
Submitting all things unto gold ;  
Nor deemest that within the breast  
Some sanctities may not be sold !

A peasant-Princess—in her veins  
The blood of Scotia's King of Hearts—

Repels with scorn thy proffered gains,  
And shame's the pride of all thy marts !

O ! gentle maid, with soul alive,  
To higher things than trade "returns ;"  
The Mammon-Meanness may not thrive,  
Where flash the eyes of ROBERT BURNS !



*BURNSIANA*





# BURNSIANA:

*A COLLECTION OF LITERARY ODDS AND ENDS*

RELATING TO

ROBERT BURNS

COMPILED BY

JOHN D. ROSS

AUTHOR OF "SCOTTISH POETS IN AMERICA,"

AND EDITOR OF "CELEBRATED SONGS OF SCOTLAND," "ROUND BURNS' GRAVE," ETC.

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Vol. II.

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ALEXANDER GARDNER

Publisher to Her Majesty the Queen

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1894

BEHOLD !—a morning sky,  
And singing in its midmost heaven, a lark,  
So sweet and clear, no trouble seemeth nigh,  
Nor footstep of the dark.

E'en so !—our ploughman bard  
In lark-like accents greets the morning ray ;  
With soul elate upspringeth from earth's sward,  
In song and raptur'd lay.

But lo !—a speck that grew  
To thunderous glooms and mutterings overhead,  
*That lyric heart is palsied in the blue,*  
*And Robert Burns lies dead !*

JOHN MACFARLANE.

This Fourth Volume of BURNSIANA is

*Dedicated to my Brother,*

PETER ROSS

(AUTHOR OF "SCOTLAND AND THE SCOTS," "A LIFE OF ST. ANDREW," ETC.),

Whose kindly assistance and advice have rendered  
doubly congenial the task of compiling this  
and the preceding Volumes.





NOTE TO VOLUMES III. AND IV.

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THE success that attended the publication of Volumes I. and II. of this work, and the large amount of material on the subject of Burns which has accumulated on my hands of late, have induced me to issue Volumes III. and IV. simultaneously. Thanks are again sincerely tendered to Subscribers, Contributors, and well-wishers.

JOHN D. ROSS.

126 PALMETTO STREET,  
BROOKLYN, N.Y., U.S.A.



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# BURNSIANA.

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## I.—MR. ROBERT FERGIE ON BURNS.

*Reply to the toast "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns," delivered before the South Edinburgh Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.*

REPRINTED FROM "NORTH BRITISH ADVERTISER AND LADIES JOURNAL."

"THE Immortal Memory of Robert Burns"—is one on which, it might well be thought, little that is new or interesting could be uttered; for have not eminent or distinguished men, both in arts, divinity, and science, dilated on this topic again and again, both here and elsewhere, and exhausted all that can be said about it? and does it not seem somewhat impertinent for a humble individual like myself to presume to crave a hearing from a company like I see around me on a subject upon which such men have dilated. Would it not be better to utter a few platitudes about the immortal bard, extract a few quotations from the many speeches which have been made upon him and his works, and afterwards sit down with the usual self-satisfied smile of a man who has just taken a good dinner, repeated a few choice phrases to which nobody can take exception, but to which, at the same time, no one pays much heed, prepared, after fulfilling this onerous duty, to attack the wine or toddy, according as his tastes leads him. Well, gentleman, this I am prepared to admit would be the better plan to follow—were it not for one great objection which I cannot see my way to set aside; and so, at the risk of tiring your patience, or expressing opinions which may not meet with the approval of all—but which may not be, nevertheless, inopportune—I will venture to make a few remarks which the toast has suggested to my mind. And, first, let me state what this

objection is to which I refer. Briefly, it is this—The influence of the works of Burns and the story of his life is an active, living influence, extending or expanding as the years roll by, affecting alike our politics, our religion, our morals, our social life, so that in any movement, no matter whether it be onward or retrograde, an apt quotation from Burns, if by any means it can be utilised, is usually considered equal to a dozen long-winded arguments, even when they are advanced by popular speakers. And this holds good, not only in our own country, but in England and Ireland as well. For the influence of Burns has long since crossed the Borders, invaded Ireland, swept across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and is felt wherever Scotsman settle or the English language is spoken. If this be so, then—and no one here, I am sure, will be inclined to contradict this assertion—is there not ample scope afforded for thought or reflection or remark for any one who can look abroad on the field of human activity, and even cursorily watch or consider how this great factor is directing or shaping events, and whether the great ideals of the bard are on the way to be realised or not. In this sense, gentlemen, you will observe that a mine of inquiry, ever developing and changing, is opened, a mine far too large to exhaustively explore or dilate upon at such a meeting as this. We can only at best wander about and pick up and examine almost at random one or two of the

pearls or diamonds of thought which are so profusely scattered about, and see what bearing they have on some of the questions that are at the present time pressing for solution.

Those who have noticed the dominant thought pervading much of the current literature at present cannot but have observed that there is a disposition abroad to rebel against or fume about what is termed the unequal dealings of Providence. The unequal distribution of wealth, and the miserable condition of many here below, especially of our labouring classes and those seeking employment, are again and again harped on as proving their assertion. It is an old topic, as you are aware, for does not poor Oliver Goldsmith, in his unique "Vicar of Wakefield," uphold the negative side, notwithstanding the rude buffetings he received from fickle fortune? and it is worth noting that Burns, notwithstanding his oft-repeated expression of sympathy with the poor and down-trodden, portrayed their privileges, their enjoyments, and advantages quite as frequently as their hardships and toils. Let me illustrate more fully what I mean. Have we not all felt a feeling of compassion arise within our hearts on beholding a miserably-clad mendicant, shivering and shaking on a cold, rainy day, bawling out—you can hardly call it singing—one of the songs it may be of Burns? Is there a more depressing spectacle, or one which appeals more directly to the tender-hearted? Yet if the story of this supposed mendicant's life were known and summed up, it is quite possible, nay probable, that his days of enjoyment would appear to be far more numerous, even when compared with those who come forward to help him in his woe-begone condition. Listen to what Burns says of the bright side of his life. I quote from the "Jolly Beggars," and it is the pigmy fiddler who sings, and extols the delights he can guarantee to his inamorata:—

"At kirms and weddings we'se be there;  
And oh sae nicely's we will fare;  
We'll bouse about till Daddy Care  
Sings whistle owre the lave o't."

Those who have enjoyed an *al fresco* picnic at classic Habbie's Howe—and where is middle-aged citizen of Edinburgh worthy of the name who has not?—can appreciate the fiddler's further enticement:—

"Sae merrily the banes we'll pyke,  
And sun oursels about the dyke,  
And at our leisure, when ye like,  
We'll whistle owre the lave o't."

But in the closing song even a higher position is taken up, and a challenge thrown down to the wealthy; and if any gentlemen here have been afflicted with gout or obesity—as many who have carriages and use them constantly unfortunately are—they will understand better the truth of the lines I now quote, and the exclamation in the chorus:—

"Does the train-attended carriage  
Through the country lighter rove?  
Does the sober bed of marriage  
Witness brighter scenes of love?"

"Life is all a variorum,  
We regard not how it goes;  
Let them cant about decorum  
Who have characters to lose.

"Then a fig for those by law protected,  
Liberty's a glorious feast;  
Courts for cowards were erected,  
Churches built to please the priest."

Just try and enter into the spirit of this song and the sentiment contained in it, and I am pretty sure you will be apt to exclaim, "After all, the mendicant's life is a jovial one as a whole!" Compare it with the hard drudgery and toil we have to undergo and the few pleasures we can snatch by the way, the beggars have the best of it. Thinking thus, we can understand why the poet closes with the words he does; and in this mood are we not almost inclined to seize our glasses and cry along with him:—

"Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!  
Here's to all the wandering train!  
Here's our ragged brats and callots!  
One and all cry out—Amen.  
A fig for those by law protected."

Granted, gentlemen, that this may be a too roseate hue of these wanderers' lives; it may at least be conceded that if this side of life were oftener looked at and pondered over than the opposite or gloomy and desponding view so frequently taken, our lives and the lives of others would be brighter, better, happier, and grumbling at our surroundings and the unequal dealings of Providence be less frequently heard. Don't, however, let me be understood as discounting the hardships and privations many of our honest God-fearing working men and women have to undergo in order to maintain their inde-

pendence. When the wages many of them receive are considered and the demands made upon them are summed up, those who are better circumstanced may well exclaim—"God knows how they live!" We hope, however, for the better time which Burns so longed for—for the good time coming; and though it does seem long in coming, don't let us despair of it not coming at all. At the same time, and as bearing on this point, let me say, I know of no better sermon or text-book more applicable at the present time than a song of Burns, part of which I shall quote, and which shows to such advantage some of the pure pleasures and delights which can be had by nearly all, and that without money and without price; yet which, strangely enough, the acquisition of wealth seems to lower or lessen in value. Listen to the description of the home of Bessy, the heroine of the "Spinning-Wheel":—

"On ilka hand the burnies trot,  
And meet below my theekit cot;  
The scented birk and hawthorn white  
Across the pool their arms unite,  
Alike to screen the birdie's nest  
And little fishes' caller rest:  
The sun blinks kindly in the biel',  
Where blythe I turn my spinning-wheel."

And this description of the pleasures with which she is surrounded:—

"On lofty aiks the cushats wail,  
And echo cons the dolefu' tale;  
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,  
Delighted, rival ither's lays:  
The craik amang the clover hay,  
The patrick whirrin' o'er the ley,  
The swallow jinkin' round my shiel,  
Amuse me at my spinning-wheel."

After this, are we who live in towns not apt to agree with the conclusion arrived at:—

"Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,  
Aboon distress, below envy,  
O, wha wad leave this humble state  
For a' the pride of a' the great?  
Amid their flaring, idle toys,  
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,  
Can they the peace and pleasure feel  
Of Bessie at her spinning-wheel?"

I have alluded to these songs because a kind of cycle of canting on such subjects has set in—"cant" that Burns so much abhorred, and is always detested by the honest and true. We may well commend this picture of peace and contentment to many of the cant-

ing agitators abroad at present—though, by the way, let me add I am not at all averse to agitators. We want progression, however attained, for stagnation means rottenness, corruption, death. Yes, we want agitators, especially those of the right stamp. Burns himself was an agitator in his day, an agitator too of the Radical type, as his avowed sympathies with the French Revolutionists show, though he thought proper to side with their opponents when liberty degenerated into license, when freedom gave place to terror, when murder held high festival, and blood flowed on all sides. And it almost seems as if, considering the wild talk too often heard, we have need of some strong men like Burns, who, favouring generally advancement, refuse to support fads, and are prepared to stand up against some of the eccentricities of so-called reformers and the legislation they would fain impose upon us. Here I might mention several questions, but will only refer to one, upon which all present, I think, are likely to agree. In all conscience, we have surely a plentiful supply of loud-voiced teetotalers. Now, gentlemen, although I admire not only temperance in alcoholic liquors but in all things, I refuse entirely to allow any man to dictate and enforce, without my consent, rules upon me as to what I shall eat or what I shall drink. And the fashion now-a-days of some of these temperance reformers, to decry as a sin or a crime or a curse the drinking of a glass of ale, seems to me a species of canting that cannot be too strongly condemned. I know it is usual for these same men to ascribe nearly all the miseries and hardships our working classes endure, as well as the crimes which fill our jails, to strong drink, forgetful that the love of money, the love of finery or dress, especially among the female portion of the community, and the gambling habit, may all lead to or be the source of untold misery or crime, but which yet is coolly ascribed to drink.

Gentlemen, I don't know what your several ideals are of social enjoyment. Some may believe that in a company such as at present assembled the best enjoyment is to be found. Some of our younger friends—choice spirits, as they used to be termed, may prefer the more boisterous mirth to be found near the



close of such a meeting as this, especially after the graver seniors have retired. But, whatever your several inclinations are—whether foregathering with lasses or without them—whether with brethren of the mystic tie, or in the home circle, I know no better picture of social enjoyment, even allowing for imperfections and after effects, than that drawn by Burns, which you all know so well :—

“ Oh, Willie brewed a peck o’ maut,  
And Rob and Allan cam’ tae pree ;  
Three blyther lads that lee-lang nicht  
Ye wadna find in Christendie.”

Here there is no great company, there is no great show, and what is perhaps best, there are none of my brethren of the pencil present to note every little folly. Yet, can we not imagine the enjoyable scene, the feast of reason and the flow of soul, that would result from such a meeting as here described? And though, with our altered customs, we would not wish to defend the excess ; withal, the harm done seems trifling, and is not so discreditable after all when compared to that emanating from so-called present-day enjoyments, which so largely find favour even in teetotal circles. When I hear such meetings loudly decried, I am always reminded of Sir Walter Scott’s novel, “The Fortunes of Nigel.” Those who have read that masterpiece of fiction will remember that the villain Dalgarno is represented as the son of an old-fashioned but honourable nobleman, the Earl of Huntinglen, and the sapient monarch, King James VI., who figures in the novel in an interview with George Heriot, thus refers to the honourable father and the ignoble son :—“This Dalgarno does not drink so much or swear so much as his father, who is, indeed, the very soul of honour ; but he wenches, he dices, Geordie, and breaks his word and oath baith.” I sometimes think of these words when I hear some of the songs of Burns, like the last one I have quoted, and the drinking customs which formerly prevailed, so strenuously decried, especially when I consider some of the pastimes which have partly taken their place. If we have not so much drinking, have we not much more dicing or gambling? which, in my humble opinion, is a great deal worse. If we have less drunkenness, are the scenes witnessed, for example, at many of our foot-

ball matches more edifying? The obscene language, the coarse expressions, the gambling that goes on, the general tone prevailing among the tens of thousands who sometimes congregate to witness a notable football match, are apt to make one sigh for the old foibles—or vices, if you will—connected with drinking, if they only otherwise be combined with honour and honourable conduct. The fact is, it seems to be overlooked that evil is many-sided—unduly dammed up at one part, it overflows with violence at another ; and that a man, to walk uprightly and honourably through life, must learn, above all, to control his appetites, his tastes his desires. “Prudence, caution, above all, self-control, is wisdom’s root.” Let it ever be borne in mind that liberty there is, but there is also ever present license. We crave for the former ; but conscience, not law, is the best monitor to preserve from the latter, and stands ever ready to warn us when we are inclined to overstep the proper boundary. True, human made law, encroaching on the domain of liberty, may punish, has punished oft for what cannot rightly be considered a crime ; but it is a dangerous and invidious task which the law undertakes, and is apt either to deaden conscience, or raise up that dangerous temper or feeling most difficult of all to quell—a feeling which is more or less awakened in all men when smarting under a sentence or punishment which they feel unjust or unmerited. No man in his day knew better than Burns the evils flowing from lack of self-control or prudence, and he more than once reveals how severely he was punished, not by law, but by the stings of his own conscience, when he stepped from temperance into excess. Thus he writes :—

“ Oh, burning hell, in all thy torments  
There’s not a keener lash.”

And yet withal the keen pleasure he must have experienced when on special occasions a few kindred spirits foregathered must have in some degree compensated for the after pain, though, it be borne in mind, excess with him was the exception not the rule. But taking the worst view of the results of such meetings, it may still be said, if Addison held “that a day, an hour of virtuous liberty was worth a whole eternity of bondage,” and

if rare pleasures must always be succeeded by lassitude or pain—as men of temperament like Burns have ever felt—then we may be thankful that this, his visits to the tavern, caused by his liking for the companions he there met, resulted in nothing more than being a wee fou ; and that he never, at least, degenerated into the cool, calculating gamester, who would sell wife or mother, or child to obtain money with which to gamble.

But, gentlemen, I fear I am trespassing on your time, and there are only two other observations I wish to make before I sit down. It is sometimes said that we are losing our taste for Scottish poetry or verse, and prefer the imported trash from London music halls and elsewhere to our Scottish songs and ballads. Professor Stuart Blackie, as you know, is never tired of raving against the upper ten especially, or our West-End gentry, for their neglect or their ignoring of the songs of their country. Well, no doubt there is much truth in what he says, and perhaps nothing else ought to be expected, for in our higher class schools everything Scottish is persistently ignored, and even in our public Board Schools a song or poem in our good Scottish Doric is seldom sung or heard, and only after reflection and reading make our middle and working classes acquainted with them. But, sir, whatever the cause, if it be true what is said on this point—and I am much inclined to think it is true—it is they, the upper ten, who are the sufferers, not those who delight in the works of Burns and others who have followed in his steps. If the upper classes prefer trash, bombast, tomfoolery, namby-pamby sentiment, and indifferent French and German translations, in preference to the exquisite pathos, the pawky humour, the heroic sentiment, the beautiful word landscapes, the soul-stirring love strains to be met with in almost any selection of Scottish songs, it need not be wondered at if their aspirations and thoughts take shape in accordance with what their minds are fed upon. Gentlemen, be it recollected the schoolmaster is not abroad ; he is now ever present ; he is now a great and increasing power in the State, and he is in one sense a great leveller. I have no fear for our nobility and the positions they hold so long as they keep in the front or even near

the front of all that is good or great or ennobling ; but if they give preference to that which is silly and contemptible, because it is imported, and ignore, discard, and decry all that is beautiful and true and noble, simply because it is the produce and fruit and genius of the country, then I say their influence ought to wane, and it requires no prophet to foretell that it will wane, and that rapidly. Again, I have heard some young ardent, aspiring spirits, who have cast their eyes around on the miseries and inequalities of life still so glaring in our mid-t, exclaim, What good has Burns done after all ? There is as much oppression, misery, destitution as ever in our midst. We require some greater force, or greater men, or a greater upheaval than ever we had to make a proper advance. But is not this another phase of the teetotalers' argument, or a desire to advance on a fortress before the right hour has arrived, or before the forces are ready ? Disaster has always followed such ill-advised steps, and nothing else might be expected. But we are advancing notwithstanding, and we trust in God will still continue to advance. Canting or hypocrisy there is, and will be ; but such poems as "Holy Willie's Prayer" and the "Holy Fair" have not been written in vain. They have been, and will ever be, stern and forcible checks, if used and applied aright, to arrest its progress, or they will act as crushers when it rears its head too far above the surface, and so exercise a power which cannot be gauged or estimated. Retrogression and depression and heart-sinking there may be ; but the trumpet-call will be ever sounding in our ear to bid us to take courage, renew the struggle, and "Onward, do or die !" Lust and passion may lure or prevail ; but is not the anathemas of the poet an aid to virtue, or a deterrent which may well make the boldest libertine pause before the fatal step is taken ?—

"Is there in human form, that bears a heart—  
A wretch ! a villain ! lost to love and truth !  
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,  
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth ?  
Curse on his perjured arts ! dissembling smooth !  
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled ?  
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,  
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child ?  
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction  
wild ?"

Once more, are we inclined to make light of religion because some of its professors are not what they ought to be, and seem more inclined to preach for pelf than for love?—does not the inimitable picture of Burns rebuke our irreverence, and teach us to look in on ourselves, our own conduct in the higher life, and study the verities of religion rather than religionists, and not to harp on the faults of others in order to screen our own? Cannot the humblest, if he chooses, act or be like the cottar who—admired by all, even by those who believe not in his creed—is thus described :—

“ Kneeling down to Heaven’s eternal King,  
The saint, the father, and the husband prays,”

for,

“ Compared to this, how poor Religion’s pride,  
In all the pomp of method and art,  
When men display to congregations wide  
Devotion’s every grace except the heart.”

Again, are you cast down, oppressed, almost overborne by the buffets of fortune? Does not the counsel tendered by Burns, or the example shown by him, point out clearly the only manly course to pursue?—“ Meet them with undaunted mind.” And though, like him, ye may hae misfortunes great and sma’, “ Hae aye a heart aboon them a’.” Where can better counsel be found than this? It is just another variant of the more elaborate passage of Dryden, where he says :—

“ Fortune, that with malicious joy  
Does man, her slave, oppress,  
Proud of her efforts to destroy,  
Is seldom pleased to bless.  
Still various and inconstant still,  
But with an inclination to do ill,  
Uplifts, degrades, delights in strife,  
And makes a mockery of life.  
I can enjoy her when she’s kind,  
But when she dances in the wind,  
And shakes her wings and will not stay,  
I puff the prostitute away.  
Content in poverty my soul I arm,  
And virtue, though in rags, shall keep me warm.”

Once again let me point for a moment to a theme on which Burns truly delights to dwell—namely, charity, and that in the noblest and widest sense of the word. He points more than once to its delights, thus—

“ A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss ;”

and he also shows, when it is neglected, how misery results—

“ Man’s inhumanity to man  
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

But it is in the charitable thought, in contradistinction to the deed, that Burns shines highest and where his precept most tells, where it may best be followed, and where on young and old alike it may be with advantage engraven on the heart :—

“ Gently scan your brother man,  
Still gentler sister woman ;  
Though they may gang a kennin’ wrang,  
To step aside is human.”

Always remembering the absolute truth of his words, which may afford a soothing balm to those who act up to them :—

“ The heart benevolent and kind  
The most resembles God.”

Lastly, does not Burns, in the midst of selfishness and all sorts of discouragements, keep ever alive within us that divine grace, hope—hope for ourselves, hope for others, hope in the coming brotherhood of man. Again and again this angel grace appears to droop her head and shake her wings, as if to depart, when we are wallowing through one of the many sloughs of despond in our journey through life, and again and again is she recalled as we take courage and utter the refrain—

“ Let us pray that come it may,  
As come it will for a’ that, . . .  
That man to man the world o’er  
Shall brothers be for a’ that.”

As to Burns’s life, what can be said? He was intensely human—human like ourselves—and to err, we all know is human. But this is very noticeable, his weaknesses and sins act as danger-signals to warn, not as false lights to allure or entice us on to destruction. What more would we have? His works, his life come down to us as a priceless legacy, which we may only neglect at our peril. I cannot believe this will ever happen. Changes may come, but truth endures; the forefront in the nations may be taken by another people, but in the direst calamities which may happen, his words will be cherished, I have no doubt, by the most undaunted and most noble spirits of our race or nation, and will

always prove a strong support and stay in perilous hours when they rely upon them. Holding such opinions, then, whether we be in prosperity or adversity, is it not meet that we should assemble to do honour to his memory. Such meetings help to renew our faith and strengthen our hope in the coming future; they give an impetus to the more generous impulses of our hearts; they incul-

cate the fraternal feeling that ought to be extended to all; as well as the social feeling that demands a time for relaxation and enjoyment as well as work; above all, they impress upon us the necessity of cultivating that Godlike attribute, charity—charity not only to the humblest, the poorest, the most degraded of our fellow-mortals, but even to the brute creation, the beasts that perish.

II.—VERSES ATTRIBUTED TO BURNS. ✕

The following lines, which have not appeared in any edition of the author's works, are said to have been composed by Burns, and written on a marble sideboard in the hermitage belonging to the Duke of Athol in the wood of Aberfeldy :—

WHOE'ER thou art, the lines now reading  
Think not, though from the world receding,  
I joy my lonely days to lead in  
    This desert dear,  
That with remorse a conscience bleeding  
    Hath led me here.

No thought of guilt my bosom sours;  
Free-willed I fled from courtly bowers;  
For well I saw in halls and towers  
    That lust and pride,  
The arch-fiend's dearest, darkest powers,  
    In state preside.

I saw mankind with vice incrustéd,  
I saw that honour's sword was rusted,  
That few for aught but folly lusted,  
That he was still deceived who trusted  
    To love or friend;  
And hither came, with men disgusted,  
    My life to end.

In this lone cave, in garments lowly,  
Alike a foe to noisy folly,  
And brow-bent, gloomy melancholy,  
    I wear away  
My life, and in my office holy  
    Consume the day.

This rock my shield, when storms are blowing,  
The limpid streamlet yonder flowing  
Supplying drink, the earth bestowing  
    My simple food;

But few enjoy the calm I know in  
    This desert wood.

Content and comfort bless me more in  
This grot than e'er I felt before in  
A palace, and with thought still soaring  
    To God on high,  
Each night and morn with voice imploring  
    This wish I sigh:

Let me, O Lord, from life retire,  
Unknown each guilty worldly fire,  
Remorseful throb, or loose desire;  
    And when I die,  
Let me in this belief expire—  
    To God I fly.

Stranger, if full of youth and riot,  
And yet no grief has marred thy quiet,  
Thou haply throw'st a scornful eye at  
    The hermit's prayer,  
But if thou hast a cause to sigh at  
    Thy fault or care;

If thou hast known false love's vexation,  
Or hast been exiled from thy nation,  
Or guilt affrights thy contemplation,  
    And makes thee pine;  
Oh! how must thou lament thy station,  
    And envy mine!

This copy is made from an old verse-book  
printed in 1815.

*Surv. by my Father*



## III.—BURNS IN ART.

BY H. C. SHELLEY.

"BRITISH painters," remarked M. Chesneau, one of the best known of French art critics, "do not usually seek their themes for heroic works from ancient mythology, but from the legends of their own poets." That judgment was formed after a course of study in the old masters of the British school. If M. Chesneau had to pen a sentence on a similar topic to-day he could hardly, in face of the recent history of British art, repeat the dictum quoted above, for it is indubitably certain that of late years our artists have become less patriotic in their choice of themes. It would be difficult to formulate a satisfactory reason for this widespread desertion of British literature by British art, for certainly no painter can claim, in the words of La Bruyère, that all is painted and he comes too late. Burns alone would give the lie to such a claim, and that notwithstanding the long list of men who have addressed themselves to the pictorial interpretation of his text. Judged by that canon which would allot poets their rank according to the number of pictures which they offer the artist, the Ayrshire bard would command a supreme place, and this fact was realised far more fully by artists of fifty years ago than it is by their present-day successors. There is still ample room for artistic work which will interpret the spirit of Burns to the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the fact that nearly a hundred years have sped by since the poet went into the great silence.

It is charming to note the rollicking enthusiasm with which Burns received Mr. Thomson's present of David Allan's picture from "The Cottar's Saturday Night." Mr. Thomson thought it one of the happiest productions of that artist's pencil, but was in considerable trepidation lest the poet's opinion should not coincide with his own. He had little reason to harbour such a thought. "Ten thousand thanks for your elegant present," the delighted poet wrote, "though I am ashamed of the value of it being bestowed on a man who has not, by any

means, merited such an instance of kindness. I have shown it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it a first-rate production. My phiz is sae kenspeckle, that the very joiner's apprentice, whom Mrs. Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once. My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. A strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail is the most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, d—n'd, wee, rumble-gairie urchin of mine, whom from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nicol, after a certain fiend of mine who is one of the masters of a grammar school in a city which shall be nameless. Several people think that Allan's likeness of me is more striking than Nasmyth's, for which I sat to him half-a-dozen times." The picture which the poet praises so warmly must be placed, chronologically, at the head of the long gallery of illustrations which, since the year 1795, have owed their inspiration to the name of Burns. It is gratifying to know that he gazed upon the first fruits of the golden artistic harvest which was to be reaped from his poems, for that was a privilege denied to Dante, to Shakespeare, and many another lord of Parnassus. David Allan also attempted illustrations of "Scots wha hae" and "John Anderson my Jo." Whether Burns saw these pictures is doubtful; and in the case of the first-named immaterial; for it is hardly probable that it would have gained his approbation. The impetuous rush of that noble song finds no expression in Allan's illustration. A motley army of anything but heroic aspect is being led against an invisible foe by an armour-clad warrior astride a very wooden horse. These are not the Scots "wha hae wi' Wallace bled," and this is not the Bruce of Bannockburn's glorious field. But

Allan was happier in dealing with the song of "John Anderson my Jo." Indeed, there is more naturalness about his picture of that domestic idyl than most of the other innumerable embodiments of the song. Here the old wife's outburst of love is plainly a mere unstudied interlude in the "trivial round, the common task" of every-day life; it is but the voicing of a spirit which dwells continually within that peaceful cottage. Other pictures of that song offend chiefly by their air of formality; the singer has condescended her part, and is conscious of a larger audience than he of the "frosty pow." In the main it is possible to agree with the praise Burns bestowed upon Allan's interpretation of "The Cottar's Saturday Night." Perhaps it is too spacious an interior the artist has given us, and at least some of its occupants wear too refined an air. The reverend old peasant has "waled a portion with judicious care," and a spirit of worship holds his listeners attentive. But the artist has struck one discordant note. The urchin seated on the floor near the fire with the end of a cat's tail between a pair of scissors sadly disturbs the harmony of the solemn scene, and it is no compensation that the poet declared him to have a striking likeness to one of his own offspring. A portrait of the poet himself is introduced into the picture in the person of the young man—presumably the "neebor lad" who came to convey Jenny home—seated on the left of the toil-worn cottar, and, so far as it is possible to judge a portrait without seeing the person portrayed, it is undoubtedly worthy of a favourable comparison with that by Nasmyth. The face has much of that form and proportion and harmony of features which Kingsley thought might lay its owner open to the danger of being mobbed by ladies whenever he walked the streets. Although executed a year before the poet died, this picture of "The Cottar's Saturday Night" seems not to have become public property until it was engraved for the edition of Burns published in Glasgow in 1836 under the joint editorship of the Ettrick Shepherd and Motherwell. The same edition contained Allan's "Scots Wha Hae" and "John Anderson my Jo," in addition to pictures by W. B. Scott of "Tam

o' Shanter" and "The Twa Dogs." Scott's rendering of the first-named poem concerned itself with the vital moment of the witches' dance, and the picture, while eminently faithful in detail, has a good deal of rapid movement and hilarious spirit. The conception of Satan is particularly successful. In interpreting "The Twa Dogs" Mr. Scott seized upon the New Year's Day Morning episode, but with less happy results than in his delineation of "Tam o' Shanter."

With remarkably few exceptions the illustrators of Burns have been peculiarly fortunate in their choice of subjects from his verse, and their good genius has rarely deserted them when the critical moment of any given poem had to be hit upon. There is more in this good fortune than appears on the surface. Goethe once remarked that it is because modern artists have no worthy subjects that people are so hampered in all the art of modern times, and he illustrated his opinion with this instance:—"Very few artists are clear on this point, or know what will really be satisfactory. For instance, they paint my 'Fisherman' as the subject of a picture, and I do not think that it cannot be painted. In this ballad nothing is expressed but the charm in water which tempts us to bathe in summer; there is nothing else in it, and how can that be painted?" But granted that the right poems have been chosen, it is equally important that the right point in each poem shall also be selected. Contemporary art furnishes us with many examples of apt decisions in this matter. In his "Three Fishers," Mr. C. N. Hemy has chosen the pathetic moment when "each thought on the woman who loved him the best:" in "On the Banks of Allan Water" Mr. Schmalz has illustrated the tragic hour in which the miller's daughter learns that her lover is false; and in "Francesca and Paola" Mr. G. F. Watts has seized the movement of the ill-fated lovers as they are borne towards Dante on the unresting blast. All these examples show keen recognition of a principle strongly insisted on by Sir Joshua Reynolds—"A painter must compensate the natural deficiencies of his art. He has but one sentence to utter; but one moment to exhibit." How constantly the illustrators of Burns have borne this principle

in mind is made plain by even a casual study of their work.

Putting aside the Liverpool edition of the works of Burns—published in 1800—which contained a few vignettes by Bewick, the first illustrated edition of the poems was that issued by an Edinburgh publisher in 1801. The two volumes have three illustrations divided between them, each being the work of Mr. A. Carse. The poems to have the greatness of artistic interpretation thrust upon them are "The Holy Fair," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and "The Jolly Beggars;" and when it is remembered that Mr. Carse had few models and no predecessors, his sterling qualities as a pioneer call for generous recognition. The illustrations are admirable examples of line work, and, though small, are liberal in detail. Unlike later illustrators of "The Holy Fair," most of whom elected to show the meeting between the poet and the "three hizzies," Mr. Carse made choice of the preaching scene for his picture. A motley crowd has gathered in the main street of Mauchline, and Moodie, with "eldritch squeel an' gestures," is clearing the points of faith "Wi' rattlin' an' wi' thumpin'" from the vantage ground of what appears to be a kind of elevated sentry-box. In his rear Smith is waiting the moment which shall afford him opportunity to "open out his cauld harangues," oblivious of the presence in the crowd of the poet who was to etch his portrait for future generations. There is about both these parsons that air of snug complacency which the poet resented so indignantly and portrayed so powerfully. As in the case of David Allan's picture, Mr. Carse's representation of "The Cottar's Saturday Night" concerns itself with the hour of family worship, and is a highly successful rendering of the reverent spirit of the simple peasants. With the "Jolly Beggars" the artist was hardly so successful. The riotous spirit of that meeting in Poosie Nansie's eluded his brush, and it is difficult to identify any of the characters save the soldier and his lass. Nevertheless, the picture is dashed with more than a touch of Hogarthian humour, and subsequent treatments of the same theme were indebted to it for several happy suggestions.

It was a fortunate chance which associated Thomas Bewick, "the Burns of painting," as Mr. Ruskin felicitously calls him, with his great prototype of poetry, and that notwithstanding the modicum of truth contained in Leslie's assertion that Bewick resembles Hogarth in being an abler expounder of his own stories than those of others. Admitting this, it is still true that in the England of the opening years of this century there was not another man who could have brought to the task of illustrating Burns so many of the qualities conspicuous in the poet's best work. It was this fact which made Leslie declare, "His feeling for the beauties of nature as they were impressed on him directly, and not at second-hand, is akin to the feeling of Burns, and his own designs remind me, therefore, much more of Burns than the few which he made from the poet." Of course, it must not be forgotten that Bewick did not prepare the designs for the edition of Burns, published at Alnwick in 1808—that part of the labour was performed by John Thurston, a London draughtsman of exceptional skill. But Bewick could not help infusing his own pronounced individuality into every stroke of his graver, and hence the directness and simplicity of the cuts he contributed to the Alnwick edition of Burns. They include fourteen whole-page illustrations, the subjects being the following:—"Death and Dr. Hornbook," "The Holy Fair," "Address to the Deil," "The Vision," "Poor Mailie," "Hallowe'en," "The Auld Farmer's Salutation," "To a Haggis," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Tam o' Shanter," "Address to the Toothache," "Man was made to Mourn," "The Lammis Night," and "Green Grow the Rashes." In addition to these whole-page plates, there are numerous tailpieces, many of which, however, have little or nothing to do with the poems to which they are appended. All these illustrations deserve reproduction. They are eminently faithful to the spirit of the poet, replete with humour or pathos, and devoid of cheap sentimentality. The old-time spirit by which they are characterised should be no obstacle to their reproduction in a present-day edition of Burns; rather would it lend a



piquancy sadly lacking in the cheaper illustrated editions of the poet.

One of the most unique of the early illustrations to Burns was the plate of "The Jolly Beggars" executed by Isaac Cruikshank, the father of George Cruikshank, as a frontispiece for a London edition of 1809. It is a crude and somewhat coarse drawing, but an admirable interpretation of the essential spirit of the poem. In addition to the figures of the principal actors in that boisterous scene in Poesie-Nansie's, there is, in the lower, right-hand corner of the plate, a wonderfully perfect drawing of a small boy, whose head does not reach the height of the old box on which the "raucle carlin" is sitting. The explanation of this interloper was given by George Cruikshank in the following letter addressed to a correspondent who had requested some information concerning the picture:—"The illustration of 'The Jolly Beggars' was designed and etched by my father, Isaac Cruikshank, who, I find, did sometimes add the additional 'e' to his name. I recollected the plate the instant I saw it, but the etching must have been done when I was very young, when my father allowed me sometimes to play at etching on the backgrounds, or on the corner of the copperplates; and in this subject of 'The Jolly Beggars' there is a little urchin standing in the corner of the plate, which is evidently one of my attempts at etching when a little boy. In a work entitled 'Points of Humour,' published about 1822-23, there are, I think, four illustrations designed and etched by me. I have also painted two pictures in oil-colours of Tam o' Shanter, and I have made many sketches from Burns's poems." Critics are nearly unanimous in giving the Burns illustrations in "Points of Humour" the highest rank among Cruikshank's drawings. Happily, however, the mood which, in the artist's later years, consecrated to temperance what should have been given to the world, passed away for a time, and in the bright interval he designed a series of illustrations to "Tam o' Shanter," which have seldom been equalled and never surpassed. Twelve full-page drawings set forth in bold outline the most memorable events in that unforgettable night, and all the by-play of elfish tricks and un-

canny sights which the imagination almost unconsciously supplies as the drama is unfolded, are woven about the text of the poem in a masterly fashion. The industrious reaper of such chattel could gather a fine harvest of anachronisms from these illustrations, but their disturbing effect is completely overborne by sheer force of genius.

John Burnet, engraver and painter, a fellow student of Sir David Wilkie, was one of the first to illustrate Burns on an extensive scale. His designs, upwards of twenty in number, appeared in an edition of the poems published in Edinburgh in 1811. Nearly every poem of importance received its interpretation, but in remarkably few instances does the interpretation harmonise with the spirit of Burns. Lack of movement and an absence of intelligent appreciation of the subsidiary points of the poems are the most conspicuous faults of Burnet's work. As engravings they approach marvellously near perfection; which is to be expected in the work of a man who asked three hundred guineas for engraving Wilkie's *Rabbit on the Wall*. A small example of Burnet's work in oil may be seen in the Corporation Galleries. It is at once the only canvas by that artist and the only Burns picture possessed by the Corporation. Perhaps one example of Burnet is enough; whether it is creditable that the Corporation of the largest city in Scotland can only show one picture interpretative of the peer of Scottish poets is a question not difficult to answer. And such a picture as the one is! The catalogue declares it to be a "Tam o' Shanter," but it has little affinity with the poem of that name. The visitor who cares to listen may often hear the *vox populi* expressing an opinion on that picture, and it is generally an opinion of a kind which would have troubled the soul of the worthy artist not a little. This may not count for much with most pictures, but in the case of a "Tam o' Shanter" it is a fatal verdict.

Burns has seldom had a more sympathetic interpreter than he secured a little more than sixty years ago in the person of Thomas Landseer, the elder brother of the famous painter of that name. Thomas Landseer occupies a commanding position in the school of British engravers, and his delicate



reproductions of his brother's most striking pictures rendered yeoman service in making their family name familiar as household words in nearly every home in these isles. Occasionally Thomas Landseer laid aside the graver for the pencil, and when he did so to illustrate "Tam o' Shanter" and the "Address to the Deil" it was with no ordinary measure of success. The illustrations to these poems were published separately in slim pamphlet form in 1830. The "Tam o' Shanter" contained five whole page drawings, extended to sixteen pages, and was published at the price of two shillings; the "Address to the Deil" had seven whole-page plates, numbered twenty-three pages, and was sold for three shillings and sixpence. The "Tam o' Shanter" is by far the abler performance of the two, but that is a verdict by no means detrimental to the "Address to the Deil;" for the interpretation of the former poem is, in its general level of excellence, about the most successful British art can boast of. Mr. Landseer concentrated his thought on the five most critical moments of the poem—the cottage where Tam's spouse sat "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," the ingle-nook of the inn consecrated to Souter Johnny's "queerest stories," the approach of Tam to the luridly-lit walls of Kirk Alloway; the mad dance of warlocks and witches within the sacred building; and the final triumph of Meg at the cost of her good gray tail. It is not difficult to agree with the opinion of a Glasgow second-hand bookseller, that these five drawings of "Tam o' Shanter" are "the best that have ever been published." Perhaps it would be safer to say that their only rivals for that place of honour are the designs by George Cruikshanks mentioned above. The illustrations of the "Address to the Deil" are based upon Stanzas V., VII., and VIII., IX., XII., XIII., XV. and XVI., and XVII., and, although not equal to the designs in the "Tam o' Shanter," they all faithfully interpret the spirit of the text, and several of them are triumphs of no mean order. Both these pamphlets are now exceedingly rare. In a recent catalogue the "Address to the Deil" was priced at 12s. 6d., and the "Tam o' Shanter" at 8s. 6d. But the latter has fetched a much higher price, for a copy once

changed hands in a Glasgow sale-room at the figure of 18s. Twenty years ago a Paisley bookseller offered a big pile of the "Tam o' Shanter" for 3d. a copy!

A series of outline drawings, somewhat in the manner of Flaxman's illustrations to Homer and Dante, was executed for the Diamond Edition of Burns's work by James Stewart, who is best remembered as the engraver of several of Wilkie's pictures. Perhaps Stewart's drawings are most remarkable for their departure from orthodox interpretations. For instance, in the picture of "Rent Day," drawn to illustrate "The Twa Dogs," it is a woman who is tholing the factor's snash, and by all appearance she is holding her own in the wordy battle, and not at all overawed by her moneyless condition. Again, in "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut," we look in vain for a portrait of the poet. The most successful of Stewart's illustrations are those interpretative of "Auld Lang Syne," "The Jolly Beggars," and "Death and Dr. Hornbook." The first is characterised by a welcome air of spontaneity; the second, though rather too self-conscious, is almost Hogarthian in its wealth of suggestive detail; and the third hits off in a happy fashion the poet's whisky-bred unconcern at his encounter with Death.

Passing over the work of Richard Westall—who gave lessons in drawing to the Queen before she came to the throne—C. Muss, W. H. Brooke, C. R. Leslie, W. and D. Lizars, T. Unwins, T. Watt, and J. Scott, justice demands that pause be taken to make honourable mention of the industry and talent Mr. John Faed, R.S.A., has devoted to illustrating the text of his great fellow-countrymen. Nearly forty years ago Mr. Faed was requested by the Royal Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland to prepare a series of illustrations to the poems of Burns, and he elected to work on "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Tam o' Shanter," and "The Soldier's Return." For each of these poems, he writes, he made a series of careful drawings in black and white, which drawings, after they had been engraved, went as prizes to the subscribers. There are eight illustrations to "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and six to each of the other two poems. In spite

of careful study and admirable draughtsmanship, it cannot be said that Mr. Faed was particularly successful in interpreting "The Cottar's Saturday Night" or "The Soldier's Return." While several of the pictures in these series could hardly be more happily conceived, yet taken as a whole they fail in that harmonious sequence which is so apparent in the poems they portray. The hero and heroine of "The Soldier's Return" are far too refined for the actors in that drama; this carefully brushed son of Mars and this soft-skinned maiden might have lived in Arcady. The same fault is manifest in the second picture of the "Tam o' Shanter" set. Otherwise that series is worthy of hearty praise. From the cottage interior, where Tam's wrathful dame keeps her sleepless vigil, to the brig where the plucky old mare foiled the hurrying pack of warlocks and witches, the story is unfolded with rare dramatic skill. Mr. Faed has revelled in the witches' dance, and has drawn a Nannie who would have pleased the poet himself, even had he been as great a judge of female beauty as he is often erroneously supposed to have been. At various times Mr. Faed has extended into oil paintings several of the sketches he made for these Burns pictures, and the number will be increased at the forthcoming exhibition of the Institute of Fine Arts in Glasgow, to which the artist is sending a painting based upon one of his sketches for "The Soldier's Return."

Perhaps the most wholesale illustrator of Burns was J. M. Wright, whose forty odd designs were engraved in steel for that ambitious edition of the Poet's works published in 1838 by George Virtue. Mr. Virtue's grandson, Mr. Herbert Virtue, still possesses the original water-colour sketches from which the engravings were made. It would be pleasant to be able honestly to praise Mr. Wright's arduous labours, but truth demands that praise be rigidly restricted to his intentions. Mr. Wright appears to have had three ideas about Scotsmen and things Scottish—first, that every male head in Caledonia is always covered with a Tam o' Shanter bonnet; second, that the "lugget caup" is never removed from the table; and, third, that every Scotsman is on all occasions accompanied by

a collie dog. Three admirable ideas, but just a trifle wearisome when reiterated through forty pictures. Although many of Mr. Wright's drawings reveal a conscientious study of the poems they are intended to interpret, there is hardly one which can be said to embody the spirit of Burns. His lovers are mostly Byronic youths indulging liberally in mock pathos, and his peasants would pass muster for gentlemen farmers. Who would dream, for instance, that the tenant facing the factor in the "Twa Dogs" picture was "scant o' cash;" he is better dressed and of sleeker aspect than any other tenant in the room.

No one studying the innumerable illustrated editions of Burns can fail to notice what a lamentable deterioration in the artistic quality of the illustrations set in about the year 1860. Probably the abolition of the duty on paper affords some explanation of this unwelcome phenomenon. Whatever the true explanation may be, it is an undoubted fact that the majority of the drawings to Burns subsequent to that date pall upon one for their commonplace sentiment and crudeness of execution. Prior to that date, however, the now veteran artist, Sir John Gilbert, R.A., prepared a series of designs for an edition of the poet, which for vivacity of spirit and honesty of sentiment still claim generous recognition in any account of Burns in art. Few artists have been so successful in rendering the spontaneity of "To a Mountain Daisy," the eerie feeling of the "Address to the De'il," or the restrained self-appreciation of "The Vision." The venerable painter informs me that he does not remember having extended any of his Burns pictures into oil paintings, an omission which every student of the poet cannot but regret. Such pictures as he proved himself competent to produce would have formed fitting companions for Sir David Wilkie's "Duncan Gray" and "The Cottar's Saturday Night."

Recent years have added remarkably little to the artistic interpretation of Burns. During the last decade, for example, how few pictures finding their *motif* in the poet's verse have appeared on the walls of the Royal Academy. In 1884 there was a "Lover's Quarrel," by

Mr. Adrian Stokes, to which the following lines were attached :—

"Had we never met and parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Lines, it is to be presumed, intended for this quotation from "Ae Fond Kiss,"

"Never met—or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Four years later, that is in 1888, Mr. Thomas Faed, R.A., exhibited a "Burns in the Cottage," showing a group of peasants listening with eager faces to a reading from the poet's pages; and in the Academy of 1891 there was a spirited and modern-toned rendering of "Tam o' Shanter," from the brush of Mr. Heywood Hardy. One or two pictures may have been overlooked; but supposing the number to be doubled, do half-a-dozen paintings in ten years represent the influence of Burns in the world of art? In reply to a request for a list of such of his pictures as owed their inspiration to Burns, Mr. Thomas Faed courteously wrote :—"I fear that I can be of little use to you, for I never really illustrated Burns. He is so mighty that I felt I could not approach him by miles by my art. I therefore looked round for subjects that struck a feeling, an original feeling, however feeble. I have painted a 'Burns and Highland Mary,' also a 'Burns in the Cottage'—a woman reading his glorious verses to her family—but I cannot remember that I ever painted a picture that I could say was an illustration." It is to be feared that few artists have refrained from attempting Burns for Mr. Faed's reason—modesty; in all likelihood the majority have been restrained by a reason now and then darkly hinted—a feeling that Burns was beneath their notice. Such artists make the mistake, as Lamb pithily remarked, of "confounding the painting of subjects in common or vulgar life with the being a vulgar artist." The history of art furnishes many examples of how disastrously even great artists have limited the range of their subjects by being indifferent to the claims of literature. They have forgotten the warning of Reynolds that "a painter stands in need of more knowledge than is to be picked off his pallet. He can never be a great artist who is grossly illiterate." Neither

does it detract from their fame to owe an inspiration to a poet, for "invention in painting does not imply the invention of the subject, for that is commonly supplied by the poet or historian." Perhaps one reason of the paucity of Burns interpretations may be found in Mr. Harry Quilter's assertion that "an awful horror of being thought British seems to have seized upon our artists." It sounds so much finer to declare one's self a cosmopolitan!

Pessimists contend that it is doubtful whether the artists of the present day are as competent to interpret Burns as the artists of fifty years ago, and, as is usually the case, there is a dash of truth in the contention. This fact alone constitutes a weighty impeachment of present day artistic methods. Whatever unfits an artist to interpret so human a poet as Burns carries its own condemnation. It is not by basking for ever on marble slabs under Grecian skies, or by shedding endless tears over Cleopatra's fate, or by ceaseless exhibitions of the woes of Perseus and Andromeda, that men will learn to live saner and more wholesome lives; and so long as these and kindred topics enthral our artists they must be powerless to interpret the message of a poet so near to nature as Burns. It is to be hoped that the reign of this unhealthy spirit is near its close, and that ere long the creations of the Ayrshire poet, along with those of his brother-bards, will glide into the studios of our artists and clamour for embodiment. It is too much to ask that the school of British art shall reflect the school of British literature, as M. Chesneau was under the impression it did? The interpretation of Burns, or of any great poet, is not child's play; it is a task which would make large demands on the powers of the most gifted artist. Burns drew from nature; the result remains as the product of nature plus the poet's individuality; but he who illustrates the poem has the difficult task of rendering nature at two removes—he has to encounter and overcome the disturbing quality of the poet's individuality, and of his own personal individuality playing on the previous product. So here is work capable of taxing the profoundest genius. But here is work, too, prepared to the brush of each specialist artist.



In the pages of Burns, Mr. Briton Riviere, that successor of Landseer, will find dumb brutes as worthy of his genius as any that have played a part in classic story; Mr. W. Q. Orchardson many tragedies of love akin to that perpetuated in his "Alone;" and Mr. Herkomer innumerable texts from which to deduce his sympathy with the hardships of the poor, and his interest in the movement of

humanity. The painter who attempts the interpretation of Burns can need no better tutor than Carlyle's penetrating essay on the poet. That will guide him to the poet's sincerity and truth, will show him the ideal within the actual, and breathe upon his canvas the uncontaminated freshness of the mountain air.

#### IV.—RHYMIN' ROBIN: AN ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE.

BY ALEX. G. MURDOCH.

"And wear thou this, she solemn said,  
And bound the holly round my head,  
The polish'd leaves and berries red  
Did rustling play,  
And like a passing thought she fled  
In light away."—*The Vision*.

A TARTAN-PLAIDED Muse, yestreen,  
As I sat lanely thinkin',  
Cam' me, an' my blin' thochts between,  
An' set my rhymes a-clinkin'.  
Her eyes, like twin stars in the lift,  
Set a' my pulses throbbin',  
The morn said she 's the twenty-fifth,  
I hope ye're mindin' Robin?"

"*The twenty-fifth!* Auld Scotland's pride,  
Forget it shall she never;  
But still shall hail its dawn," I cried,  
And tell its worth for ever.  
For, fighting thro' his life's brief day,  
An honest, brave, and true man—  
A hero rob'd in hodden gray—  
Was Burns, the Ayrshire ploughman.

"Are ye," quoth I, "the lady fair  
That gart his heart-strings tingle,  
As he resolved to rhyme nae mair,  
Yon nicht beside the ingle?  
The bonnie Muse that gied to him  
The laurel wreath o' holly—  
A gift that never shall grow dim  
Tho' stain'd a wee bit folly.

"The same! for now I recognise  
The poet's bright description,  
The snaw-white broo, the lustrous eyes,  
The clean leg, sae bewitchin'.

And streamin' loose, the pictur'd plyde  
That shows the tartan border;  
Ye're welcome to my ingle-side,  
And what's the Muses' order?"

I look'd again, but she was fled—  
Gane and awa' thus early;  
But echo rang the words she said,  
And, O, they thrill'd me fairly:—  
"*The morn's the twenty-fifth,*" said she,  
"*I hope ye're mindin' Robin?*"  
And that night, ere I closed an e'e,  
Thrang bumm'd my rhymin' bobbin':—

O, Robbie Burns! O, Robbie Burns!  
Dost thou in Heaven hear it?  
Again thy natal day returns,  
And Scotland leaps to cheer it.  
Her hero spirit catches fire,  
Beneath the strong emotion,  
As song's bright message thrills the wire  
That threads the heart's wide ocean.

And oft, the bonnet aff her brow,  
She reads her poet's story—  
How he, behind his rustic plough,  
Lit fields and streams wi' glory.  
With grandeur cloth'd the "Cottar's" hearth,  
And with a proud endeavour,  
Gave honest Worth, ower a' the earth,  
A crown to wear for ever.



Not his the light of Shakespeare's line,  
 Nor Milton's massive splendour ;  
 But Scotland rich in Auld Langsyne  
 Needs naething mair to mend her.  
 And while a "Daisy" decks the soil,  
 And while a wrang needs rightin',  
 The rough, strong-hearted sons of toil,  
 Shall still his songs delight in.

For Scotland's shining book o' Fame  
 Records no prouder glory  
 Than garland's Robert Burns's name,  
 And tells no manlier story.  
 Then here's a toast, will ne'er be lost,  
 While Scottish hearts are throbbin'—  
 Hip, hip, hurrah—the glorious day  
 Gied Scotland Rhymin' Robin !

## V.—UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF ROBERT BURNS.

BY G. A. AITKEN.

FROM THE "SCOTSMAN," JANUARY 25, 1893.

A FEW weeks ago I felt it my duty to send to the *Evening Dispatch* a description of a number of forged Burns papers which had been offered to me for purchase. I have now the pleasanter task of publishing some interesting letters about whose genuineness there can be no dispute. The greater part of these papers are in the Laing collection in the Edinburgh University Library, and before they came into Dr. Laing's hands they belonged to Sir Walter Scott, and were known to Lockhart when he was writing his "Life of Burns." In the same volume are some notes, by Joseph Train, antiquary and Supervisor of Excise at Castle Douglas, gathered together for Lockhart's use ; and there are a few holograph poems. These latter have all been published ; but the MSS. offer some new readings, which will be duly recorded in my forthcoming edition of Burns's poems in Messrs. Bell's Aldine Poets. Other new letters here given are from the splendid collection of Mr. Alfred Morrison, and were generally purchased at Mr. Sotheby's rooms. I am much indebted to Mr. Morrison for permission to copy these letters ; to the Rev. Eric Robertson for calling my attention to those in the Edinburgh University ; and to Mr. Webster, the librarian, for the facilities he afforded me. I have recently shown—in the "Burns Chronicle" for 1893—that a collation of other letters, already published, in Mr. Morrison's collection, confirms the belief that Currie and other early editors took unwarrantable liberty in printing Burns's correspondence ; for they not only made

omissions, which was occasionally imperative, but they introduced what were supposed to be verbal improvements. To this matter, I shall have to refer again in the present article.

The earliest in date of the papers in the library of Edinburgh University is a draft letter "To the Rev. Mr. Greenfield, inclosing two songs, the composition of two Ayrshire mechanics," dated December 1786, soon after Burns reached Edinburgh. The paper is endorsed "Burns: Letters to several persons. Sent to Lady H. Don, 26 March, 1787 ;" and it will be found that several phrases in the letter are, as was often the case, identical with passages in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop of January 15, 1787 (Douglas's "Works of Robert Burns," iv., 192.) The Rev. William Greenfield, Professor of Rhetoric, was one of the first of the literary circle of the city to make Burns's acquaintance. The poet spoke highly of him in his "Journal," but his end was sad (Douglas, vi., 391-395.) Lady Harriot Don—a "divine lady"—was sister to the Earl of Glencairn.

To the Rev. William Greenfield, inclosing two songs, the composition of two Ayrshire mechanics.

REVEREND SIR,—On raking the recesses of my memory the other day, I stumbled on two songs, which I here inclose you as a kind of curiosity to a Professor of the Belle Lettres de la Nature, which, allow me to say, I look upon as an additional merit of yours ; a kind of bye Professorship, not always to be found among the systematic Fathers and

Brothers of scientific criticism. They were the work of bards such as, I believe, I had better still have seen.

Never did Saul's armour sit so heavy on David when going to encounter Goliath, as does the encumbering robe of public notice with which the friendship and patronage of some "names dear to fame" have invested me. I do not say this in the ridiculous idea of seeming self-abasement and affected modesty. I have long studied myself, and I think I know pretty exactly what ground I occupy, both as a Man and a Poet; and however the world, or a friend, may sometimes differ from me in that particular, I stand for it, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I am willing to believe that my abilities deserved a better fate than the veriest shade of life; but to be dragged forth, with all my imperfections on my head, to the full glare of learned and polite observation, is what, I am afraid, I shall have bitter reason to repent.

I mention this to you, once for all, merely in the Confessor style, to disburthen my conscience, and that "when proud Fortune's ebbing tide recedes," you may bear me witness, when my babble of fame was at the highest, I stood, unintoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward, with rueful resolve, to the hastening time when the stroke of anxious calumny, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph, should dash it to the ground.—I am, ever, etc.

December, 1786.

The next paper in the Edinburgh University affords an illustration of Currie's methods. It is a draft, dated "Edinr., Feb.," of the letter to Mr. James Dalrymple, of Orangefield, which is given in Douglas's edition (iv., 168), with the conjectural date, November 30, 1786. At the end of the first paragraph Currie omitted the following words:—"Or, to go farther back, as the brave but unfortunate Jacobite clans who, as John Milton tells us, after their unhappy Culloden in Heaven, lay 'nine times the space that measures day and night' in oblivious astonishment, prone weltering on the fiery surge." At the end of the next paragraph, the following words are omitted, after "St. Peter's keys to":—"the h—ll-mouthing John Russell

(Burns's 'Black Jock') family prayers in the house of Orangefield, on another brace of bantlings to a certain Bard already overcharged with a numerous issue." The conclusion of the letter, too, is omitted:—"For the blind, mischief-making little urchin of a deity you mention, he and I have been sadly at odds ever since some dog tricks he played me not half a century ago. I have compromised matters with his godship of late by uncoupling my heart and fancy for a slight chace after a certain Edinr. belle. My devotions proceed no farther than a forenoon walk, a sentimental conversation, now and then a squeeze of the hand on interchanging au vieillage, and when peculiar good-humour and sequestered propriety allow—"Brethren, salute one another with a holy kiss."—S. Paul.

'Kissin' is the key o' love,  
An' clappin' is the lock,  
An' makin' o's the best thing  
That ere a young thing got.'

An auld sang o' my mither's.—I have the honour to be," etc.

This old song, with some alterations, Burns afterwards sent to Johnson for the "Museum" (Douglas, iii. 74).

The next letter, which is without date, was given by Currie, but was so much altered by him that it will be best to print the whole as it stands in the MS. This is the important letter, addressed to the Earl of Glencairn, in which Burns asked for his Lordship's interest to obtain a post in the Excise (Douglas, iv., 319):—

MY LORD,—I know your Lordship will disapprove of my ideas in the request I am going to make to you; but I have weighed my situation, my hopes, and turn of mind, and am fully fixed to my scheme if I can effectuate it. I wish to get into the Excise. I am told that your Lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the Commissioners; and your Lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have put it in my power to save the little home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction.

My brother's lease is but a wretched one, though I think he will probably weather out

the remaining seven years of it. After what I have given and will give him as a small farming capital to keep the family together, I guess my remaining all will be about two hundred pounds. Instead of begging myself with a small, dear farm, I will lodge my little stock, a sacred deposit, in a banking-house. Extraordinary distress, or helpless old age, have often harrowed my soul with fear; and I have one or two claims on me in the name of father. I will stoop to anything that honesty warrants to have it in my power to leave them some better remembrance of me than the odium of illegitimacy.

These, my Lord, are my views. I have resolved on the maturest deliberation; and now I am fixed, I shall leave no stone unturned to carry my resolve into execution. Your Lordship's patronage is by far the strength of my hopes; nor have I yet applied to anybody else. Indeed, I know not how to apply to anybody else. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the idea of the cold promise as the cold denial; but to your Lordship I have not only the honour and the happiness, but the pleasure of being, my Lord, your Lordship's much obliged and deeply indebted humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—I have enclosed your Lordship Holy Willie, and will wait on you the beginning of next week, as against then I hope to have settled my business with Mr. Creech.

Burns was to receive one hundred guineas for the copyright of the poems published in 1787, and on the 31st of March—the day upon which orders were issued from the Excise Office for the instruction of Burns in the art of gauging, etc.—the poet wrote to Creech from Mauchline—"As I am seriously set in for my farming operations, I shall need that sum your kindness procured me for my copyright. I have sent the line to Mr. John Somerville, a particular friend of mine, who will call on you; but as I do not need the sum, at least I can make a shift without it till then. Any time between now and the first of May, as it may suit your convenience to pay it, will do for me." The money was paid on the 30th of May (Douglas, v., 125),

and in the meantime Burns had decided to make Jean Armour his wife.

The two next letters appear to have been sent to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham:—

ELLISLAND, near DUMFRIES,  
22nd Janry., 1789.

MY LADY,—As the officious gratitude of a poor creature, however it may be a little troublesome, can never be disagreeable to a good heart, I have ventured to send your ladyship this packet. That from a dabbler in rhymes I am become a professed Poet; that my attachment to the Muses is heated into enthusiasm; that my squalid Poverty is changed for comfortable Independence, is the work of your Ladyship's noble Family. Whether I may ever make my footing good, on any considerable height of Parnassus, is what I do not know; but I am determined to strain every nerve in the trial. Though the rough material of fine writing is undoubtedly a gift of Genius, the workmanship is as certainly the united effort of labour, attention, and pains. Nature has qualified few, if any, to shine in every walk of the muses: I shall put it to the test of repeated trial whether she has formed me capable of distinguishing myself in any one.

In the first great concern of life, the means, the means of supporting that life, I think myself tolerably secure. If my farm should not turn out well, which after all it may not, I have my Excise Commission in reserve. This last is comparatively a poor resource, but it is luxury to anything the first five-and-twenty years of my life taught me to expect; and I would despise myself, if I thought I were not capable of sacrificing one little liquorish gratification on the altar of Independence. A little spice of indolence excepted, I thank Heaven there is not any species of dissipation that I cannot set at defiance. The indolent reveries of a bemused mind are indeed the sins that easily beset me; but, like the noxious vapours that annoy miners, I am afraid they are evils that necessarily rise from my very Profession.

The enclosed Poems are the favours of the Nithsdale Muses. The Piece inscribed to R— G—, Esq., is a copy of verses which I sent to Mr. Graham of Fintry, with a request for his assistance to procure me an



Excise Division in the middle of which I live. On my return from Edin. last, I found my aged mother, my brothers and sisters, on the brink of ruin with their farm; and as I am certain the remainder of their lease will be worth holding, I advanced them nearly one-half of my capital to keep their little Commonwealth together, and place them in comfort. My own farm here I am pretty sure will in time do well; but for several years it will require assistance more than my pocket can afford. The Excise salary would pay half my rent, and I could manage the whole business of the Division without five guineas of additional expense.

I shall be in Edinburgh in about a month, when I shall do myself the honour to inform your Ladyship farther of these to me important matters, as I know your Goodness will be interested in them.

In all my domestic concerns I find myself extremely comfortable. I muse and rhyme, morning, noon, and night; and have a hundred different poetic plans, pastoral, georgic, dramatic, etc., floating in the regions of fancy, somewhere between Purpose and Resolve. To secure myself from ever descending to anything unworthy of the independent spirit of Man, or the honest pride of Genius, I have adopted Lord Glencairn as my titular Protector—what your scholars call by the heathen name of *Dii penates* I think it is. I have a large shade of him, with the verses I intended for his picture, wrote out by Butterworth, pasted on the back; and a small shade of him, both by Miers, set in a gold breast-pin, with the words "*Mon Dieu et toi*" engraved on the shell. The first I have hung over my Parlour chimney-piece; the last I keep for gala days. I have often, during this winter, wished myself a great man, that I might, with propriety in the etiquette of the world, have inquired after Lady Glencairn's health. One of the sons of little men as I am, I can only wish fervently for her welfare; or in my devout moods, pray for her, in the charming language of Mackenzie, that "the Great Spirit may bear up the weight of her grey hairs, and blunt the arrow that brings them rest."

I shall not add to this unconscionable letter by a tedious apology, or anything more

than assuring your ladyship that with the warmest sincerity of heartfelt, though powerless gratitude, I have the honour to be, my Lady, your Ladyship's deeply indebted and ever grateful humble servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

Ellisland, near Dumfries,  
15th May, 1789.

MY LADY,—Though I claim the privilege your Ladyship's goodness allows me of sending you copies of anything I compose in the way of my Poetic Trade, I must not tax you with noticing each of my idle epistles. The inclosed piece pleading the cause of Humanity is for your Ladyship; the other, a specimen of the Author's Political Piety, I present with my humble respects to the noble Earl to whom I owe my All.

Though I had no other motive, I would continue to cultivate the acquaintance of the Muses for the sake of having an opportunity of assuring the Noble family of Glencairn with what enthusiasm I have the honour to be the grateful creature of their bounty, and their very humble Servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

The next letter was also in all probability addressed to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham. Cromeek printed the greater part of it (Douglas, v. 277) as a letter to the Dowager-Countess of Glencairn, and the MS. in the University Library differs constantly from Cromeek's version. But it is difficult to believe that Burns could send two letters so closely resembling each other to different members of the same family; and towards the end of the MS. version there is an allusion to Lady Glencairn. It will be best to give this version in full, in order that any who wish may collate it with the text given in the ordinary editions.

Ellisland, 23rd Decr., 1789.

MY LADY,—The honour you have done your poor poet in writing him so very obliging a letter, and the pleasure the enclosed beautiful verses have given him, came very seasonably to his aid amid the cheerless gloom and sinking despondency of December weather and diseased nerves. As to forgetting the family of Glencairn, with which you tax me, Heaven is my witness with what



sincerity I could use those simple, rude, but, I think, strongly expressive verses :—

“ If thee, Jerusalem, I forget,  
Skill part from my right hand ;  
My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave,  
If I do thee forget,  
Jerusalem ! and thee above  
My chief joy do not set.”

When I am tempted to do anything improper, I dare not, because I look on myself as accountable to your Ladyship and family. When, now and then, I have the honour to be called to the tables of the great, if I happen to meet with anything mortifying from the stately stupidity of self-sufficient squires, or the luxuriant insolence of the upstart nabobs, I get above the creatures by calling to remembrance that I am patronised by the noble house of Glencairn ; and at gala times, such as New Year's Day, a christening, or the kirk-night, when my punch-bowl is brought from its dusty corner, and filled up in honour of the occasion, I begin with—*The Countess of Glencairn !* My goodwoman, with the enthusiasm of a grateful heart, next cries—*My Lord !* and so the toast goes on until I end with—*Lady Harriet's little angel !* whose epithalamium I have pledged myself to write.

When I received your Ladyship's letter, I was in the act of transcribing the enclosed Poems, such as they are, for you, and meant to have sent them in my first leisure hour, and acquainted you with a late change in my way of life. By the generous friendship of one of the first of men, Mr. Graham of Fintry, I have got the Excise Division in the midst of which I live, and considering my unlucky bargain of a farm, I find £50 per annum, which is now our salary, an exceeding good thing.

People may talk as they please of the ignominy of the Excise ; but what will support my family and keep me independent of the world is to me a very important matter ; and I had much rather that my profession borrowed credit from me, than that I borrowed Credit from my profession. Another advantage I have in this business is the knowledge it gives me of the various shades of human character, and consequently assisting me in my trade as a Poet. Not that I am in haste or the press, as my Lord has been told ; had

it been so I would have been highly wanting to myself not to have consulted my generous noble patron ; but still, to be a poet is my highest Ambition, my dearest Wish, and my unwearied study. I am aware that though I were to give to the world performances superior to my former works, if they were of the same kind the comparative reception they would meet with would mortify me. For this reason I wish still to secure my old friend Novelty, on my side, by the *kind* of my performances. I have some thoughts of the Drama. Considering the favourite things of the day, the two and three act pieces of O' Keefe, Mrs. Inchbald, etc., does not your Ladyship think that a Scottish Audience would be better pleased with the Affectation, Whim, and Folly of their own native growth, than by manners which to by far the greatest (number) of them can be only second-hand ? No man knows what Nature has fitted him for until he try ; and if after a preparatory course of some years' Study of Men and Books, I should find myself unequal to the task, there is no great harm done. Virtue and Study are their own reward. I have got Shakespeare, and begun with him, and I shall stretch a point and make myself master of all the Dramatic Authors of any repute, in both English and French, the only languages which I know.

I ought to apologise to your Ladyship for sending you some of the enclosed rhymes, they are so silly. Everybody knows now of poor Dr. M'Gill. He is my particular friend, and my Ballad on his prosecution has virulence enough if it has not wit. You must not read, Lady Glencairn, the stanza about the Priest of Ochiltree. Though I know him to be a designing, rotten-hearted Puritan, yet perhaps her Ladyship has a different idea of him. The Ode to the Regency Bill was mangled in a newspaper last winter. The Election ballad alludes to our present canvass in this string of Boroughs. I do not suppose their (sic) will be a harder run match in the whole General Election. I have avoided taking a side in Politics. The Song is the only one of the enclosed pieces that I think worthy of being sent to so good a judge as your Ladyship.

I will not add to this tedious epistle more

than to assure your Ladyship with what grateful sincerity I have the honour to be, your Ladyship's highly obliged and most obedient humble servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

The MS. of a letter to Dr. Moore, written a month after Lord Glencairn's death, is in Mr. Morrison's collection (Douglas, v., 349.) The correct date is "Ellisland, near Dumfries, 28th Feb., 1791." Currie and subsequent editors have spoilt the sense by inserting "no" before "service" in the sentence—"Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourn," etc. The following is the passage replaced by Currie, with asterisks :—

What a rocky-hearted, perfidious succubus was that Queen Elizabeth! Judas Iscariot was a sad dog to be sure, but still his demerits sink to insignificance compared with the doings of the infernal Bess Tudor. Judas did not know, at least was by no means sure, what and who that Master was; his turpitude was simply betraying a worthy man who had ever been a good Master to him, a degree of turpitude which has even been outdone by many of his kind since. Iscariot, poor wretch, was a man of nothing at all per annum, and by consequence, thirty pieces of silver was a very serious temptation to *him*. But to give but one instance, the Duke of Q—ry, the other day, just played the same trick to *his* kind Master, tho' his Grace is a man of thirty thousand a year, and come to that imbecile period of life when no temptation but avarice can be supposed to affect him.

The next letter (in Mr. Morrison's collection) is addressed to Mr. Alexr. Coutts, Whitehaven.

DEAR SIR,—I am much your debtor for ye two elegant epistles. I had written you long ago, but I still hoped my Muse would enable me to answer you *in kind*; but the Muses are capricious gipseys, at least I have ever found them so. In the meantime I send you this case (?) like other poor devils who are in debt, to beg a little time—"Have patience and I will pay thee all,"—I shall reprobate my Muse to all eternity, if she do

not very soon inspire me to tell you in verse how sincerely I am, Dr. Sir, Yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

Ellisland, near Dumfries,

28th April, 1791.

The following letter to Lady Hariot Don—in the Edinburgh University Library—refers to Burns's "Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn." He had previously consulted Lady Elizabeth Cunningham as to the publication of this poem (Douglas, v., 361), but she, it seems, referred him to Lady Hariot Don :—

Ellisland, near Dumfries,

23d Oct., 1791.

MY LADY,—The inclosed is a tribute to the memory of a Man, the memory of whom shall mix with my latest recollection. As all the world knows my obligation to the late noble Earl of Glencairn, I wish to make my gratitude equally conspicuous, by publishing this poem. But in what way shall I publish it? It is too small a piece to publish alone. The way which suggests itself to me is, to send it to the Publisher of one of the most respectable periodical works: *The Bee*, for instance. Lady Betty has referred me to you. The Post is just going, else I would have taken the opportunity of the frank, and sent your Ladyship some of my late pieces.

I have the honour to be, my Lady,

Your Ladyship's grateful humble Servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

[Then follows the "Lament for the Earl of Glencairn," with this postscript] :—

To Lady Hariot Don, this Poem, not the fictitious creation of poetic fancy, but the breathings of real love from a bleeding heart, is respectfully and gratefully presented by

THE AUTHOR.

Mr. Douglas has given two sentences of a note sent to Miss Fontenelle, of the Dumfries Theatre, in December, 1793 (vi., 94). The draft—in Mr. Morrison's collection—proceeds as follows: perhaps Burns did not copy the whole when he wrote out the letter :—

Were I a man of gallantry and fashion, strutting and fluttering on the foreground of the picture of Life, making this speech to a lovely young girl might be construed to be one of the doings of All Powerful Love; but

you will be surprised, my dear Madam, when I tell you that it is not Love, nor even Friendship, but sheer avarice. In all my justlings and jumbings, windings and turnings, in life, disgusted at every corner, as a man of the least taste and sense must be, with vice, folly, arrogance, impertinence, nonsense and stupidity, my soul has ever, involuntarily and instinctively, selected as it were for herself a few whose regard, whose esteem, [whose hearts (*deleted*)], with a *Miser's Avarice* she wished to appropriate and preserve. It is truly from this cause, ma chere Made-moiselle, that any the least service I can be of to you gives me most real pleasure. God knows I am a powerless individual. And when I thought on my friends, many a heart-ache it has given me ! But if Miss Fontenelle will accept this honest compliment to her [lovely person (*deleted*)] personal charms, amiable manners, and gentle heart, from a man too proud to flatter, though too poor to have his compliments of any consequence, it will sincerely oblige her *anxious* Friend, and most devoted humble (servant).

One note in Mr. Morrison's collection is addressed to Mr. Findlater, the Supervisor. There is no date :—

DR. FINDLATER,—Will you give and receive happiness—both very pleasant business—some butts of wine are to use up, you will find Messrs. Simms, Hyslop, and a stranger, to whom you will like to be known. COME !!!

R. B.

Nanie Welsh's.

Burns's friend, Mr. Robert Riddell, of Glenriddell and Friar's Carse, died in April, 1794, and the estate was announced for sale in June. Burns was anxious that Mr. McLeod (Douglas, iv., 258) should purchase the property, and the steps he took with that object appear from the following letter to that gentleman (Mr. Morrison's MSS.) :—

Dumfries, 18th June, 1794.

SIR,—The fate of Carse is determined. A majority of the Trustees have fixed its sale. Our friend, John Clarke, whom you remember to have met with here, opposed the measure with all his might, but he was overruled. He, wishing to serve Walter Riddell, the surviving brother, wanted the widow to take a given

annuity, and make over to him the survivancy of the paternal estate; but, luckily, the widow most cordially hates her brother-in-law, and, to my knowledge, would rather you had the estate, though five hundred cheaper, than that Wattie should. In the meantime Wattie has sold his Woodley park to Colon. Goldie, the last proprietor. Wattie gave £16,000 for it, laid out better than £2000 more on it, and has sold it for £15,000. So much for Master Wattie's sense and management, which, *entre nous*, are about the same pitch as his worth.

The trustees have appointed a gentleman to make out an estimate of the value of the *terra firma* in the estate, which you know is by far the principal article in the purchase; the house and woods will be valued by some professional man. The gentleman they have pitched on is a Mr. Wm. Stewart, factor and manager for Mr. Monteath of Closeburn. Stewart is my most intimate friend, and has promised me a copy of his estimate—but please let this be a dead secret. Stewart was the intimate and confidential friend of poor Riddell that is gone, and will be trusted and consulted in all the business,—and from him I am to know every view and transaction. I assure you it has cost me some manœuvring to bring this to bear; but as this kind of underhand intelligence may and will be of very considerable service to you, if you are still thinking of the purchase, I have in a manner beset and waylaid my friend Stewart, until I have prevailed on him. By this day se'en-night Stewart will have made out his estimate, and against that day you shall hear from me. As soon as the advertisement appears in the papers, which will be, Stewart tells me, in a fortnight or so, I will go over the woods with an acquaintance of mine, who is a twenty years' experienced judge in the way of buying woods; and you shall have the exact value of every stick on the property. I could not go over the estate in that way, you know, until the sale be formally announced. The idea of the Trustees is to bring on the sale in October, so that the purchaser may enter at Martinmas.

Now, my lately-acquired, but much valued and highly honor'd Friend, let me urge you to be in earnest with this business. Here is



positively the most beautiful spot in the lowlands of Scotland; absolutely the masterpiece of Nature in that part of the kingdom, and would you not wish to call it yours? This country is charmingly romantic and picturesque in the whole; 'tis besides highly improving and improvable, and a cheap country to live in. You will be within six miles of the third town for importance and elegance in Scotland; your neighbourhood will abound in "Honest men and bonnie lasses"—do, come and be happy, and make me in particular, and the whole country happy, by adding Mr. McLeod's worth and Mrs. McLeod's amiableness—not to speak of their splendid fortune and distinguished rank—to this already deserving and enchanting part of the kingdom.

You see with what selfishness I have the honor to be, Dear Sir,

Your obliged and devoted humble servt.,  
ROBT. BURNS.

The following short note—sold at Messrs. Sotheby's rooms in November 1891—was sent to Mr. Thomas Sloan, Dumfries, the friend to whom, in 1791, Burns gave an account of the sale at Ellisland (Douglas, v., 393):—

I am truly sorry, my dear Sir, that my black mare has hurt one of her hind legs so ill that she cannot travel, else she should have been at your service. Many thanks for your attentions. I much wish to see you. I called on Captain Riddell to-day, who inquired kindly for you: he is getting better.

Excuse this brief epistle from a broken arm.  
—Yours, R. B.

P.S.—I have recruited my purse since I saw you, and you may have a guinea or two if you chuse.

A letter to the Mr. William Stewart, of Closeburn Castle, referred to in the letter to Mr. McLeod, given above, was sold at Messrs. Sotheby's rooms in May last. It is endorsed—"This day forwarded and enclosed in a letter to Mr. Burns, £3 3s. od. st., and for which I hold no security in writing.—WILLIAM STEWART." It is, as the writer says, a painful note.

Dumfries, January 15, 1795.

This is a painful disagreeable letter; and the first of the kind I ever wrote—I am truly

in serious distress for three or four guineas; can you, my dear sir, accommodate me? It will, indeed, truly oblige me. These accursed times, by stopping up importation, have for this year, at least, lopt off a full third part of my income, and with my large family, this to me is a distressing matter.—Farewell, and God bless you.

R. BURNS.

The following letter from James Johnson, editor of the "Musical Museum," was evidently written after the receipt of the letter from Burns of the 29th June, 1794, (Douglas, vi., 134.) It is now in the Edinburgh University Library, and is addressed to "Mr. Robert Burns, Officer of Excise, Dumfries." Burns has himself alluded to the eccentricities of Johnson's spelling (Douglas, vi., 179.)

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your additional favours with the Durk (?) I received, and am ashamed I did not write to you sooner concerning what you requested anent the Songs Mr. Urbani had taken, but I deferred till I could inform you that the 5th vol. was actually begun, which is now the case. Mr. Clark has given me some to begin with and he is busie with more he has promised to hold me agoing please accept my warmest thanks for all your kind favours and wishes I could have it in my power, but to serve you, this fresh supply has added new life to me as I was trembling for fear lest we should not make up the Number. I should have been gled to have heard from you along with the parcel but suspect you have been angry with me as I did not answer your last favour. I shall take care to the venerable Relick of Balmerino as soon as possible—there has been lately published 2 Volumes of Scots Songs in London. I think we might cull a few Songs from them. There is some Songs in it without Tunes which my father and your Humble Servant at least can have. Mr. Clark will take them off. They have been very free in their practice, they deserve to be prosecuted—there is a Mr. Watland a Music Seller in Edinr. thinks no more sin to take out of the Museum and print them single songs then a beggar would in taking a halfpeny however my friend I do not mention this that your productions are, or may be bound, but I mention this of Pirots taking without your or our advice and lafing and say-



ing they will take any of them they please and saying I may be thankfull they do not print them all as they have as good a right as me, however I leave this but it would be well done to give a check at home so as to keep those at a distance in some sort of aw.

My Dear friend, I must still beg you to add another favoure, however, I do not know if your delicasy will permit you, but if you would do it, it would be a particular kindness douing me. You know your and my worthy friend Mr. Robt. Riddle had a book of Music engraved by me of which he made a sollemn promise before these Witness, Mr. Stephen Clark, and Mr. Smelie the printer, that if the Book did not pay itself within a limited time he (Mr. Riddle) would pay the Ballance I did write Mrs. Riddle to the same purpose severall mounths ago, I did not choose to press her by a second letter lest it should rise a pang for the Desesed, but would beg of you to mention it in as tender a manner as possibell (you know the properest method) to take her I shall be as easy as possibell and will compromise the Matter in as easy a way as I can the whole Sum for Engraving, printing etc., is £18 10 3, and I am persuaded I have not sold 10 copies; it was against my will to have medled with that publication as I was serten it wuold not sell, and of which Mr. Clark is witness if Mrs. Riddle would make any kind of offer so as to get this business settled, and if she chuse she may have some copies of the Book to give to her acquaintance.

Below is the list of songs Mr. Urbani took out of the British Museum, which he solicited, and I made him welcome. I need not mention the others, as they are to be had almost in every book of Scots Songs. My Father and Wife, who is now moving about, desire to be remembered in the kindest manner to you and Mrs. Burns. And I rest, Dear Friend, your much obliged and Humble Ser.,

JAMES JOHNSON.

[In the list given we find :—"Lord Gregory," which made a great noise in Edinburgh; "I'll lay me down and die," music by a young Lady; "It will not do for us," being property, etc.]

Burns died on the 21st of July, 1796, and

John Lewars, his fellow officer, and the brother of Jessie Lewars, who nursed Burns in his last illness, helped the widow by writing the necessary letters to various friends. The letters given below (or rather copies of them) are all in the Edinburgh University Library. The first is to Mrs. Dunlop, and it is pleasant to find that that lady had resumed her correspondence with the poet in time for him to appreciate her letter.

MADAM,—At the desire of Mrs. Burns I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and at same time inform you of the melancholy and much regretted event of Mr. Burns's death. He expired on the morning of the 21st, after a long and severe illness. Your kind letter gave him great ease and satisfaction, and was the last thing he was capable of perusing or understanding. The situation of his unfortunate widow and family of most promising boys, Mrs. Dunlop's feelings and affection for them will much easier paint than I can possibly express, more particularly when Mrs. Dunlop is informed that Mrs. Burns's situation is such that she is expected to ly in dayly. I am certain that a letter from Mrs. Dunlop to Mrs. Burns would be a very great consolation, and her kind advice most thankfully received.—I am, with the greatest respect, your most obt. and very humble sernt.,

JNO. LEWARS.

Dumfries, 23rd July, 1796.

The next letter is to Captain Crosbie.

SIR,—At the desire of Mrs. Burns I have to acquaint you with the melancholy event of our friend's death. He expired on the morning of 12, abt five o'clock. The situation of the unfortunate Mrs. Burns and her charming boys your feeling heart can easily paint. However, much to the credit of a few of his friends in this place, who have stepped forward with their assistance and advice, and from their respectable connections and situation in life, there can be no doubt of a very handsome provision being raised for his widow and family. Tho' some of these gentlemen have wrote to all the Edin. professors with which either he or Mr. Burns were acquainted, and to several other particular friends, you will easily excuse your not having sooner an answer to your very kind letter of

—instant, with an acknowledgment of the contents, for, at the time it was received Mr. B—— was total unable either to write or dictate a letter, and Mrs. Burns wished to defer answering it till she saw what turn affairs took.—I am, with much respect, your mo. obt. and very humble sernt.

The third letter from Lewars (for Mrs. Burns) is to Burns's cousin, James Burness, of Montrose :—

DEAR SIR,—I was duly favoured with your letter of the 29th ulto. Your goodness is such as to render it wholly out of my power to make any suitable acknowledgment or express what I feel for so much kindness. With regard to my son, I cannot as yet determine, the gentlemen (particularly Dr. Maxwell and Mr. Syme) who have so much interested themselves for me and the family do not wish that I should come to any resolution with respect to parting with any of the boys, and I own that my own feelings rather incline me to keep them with me. I think they will be a comfort to me, and my most agreeable companions. But should any of them part from me, Mr Burness would be of all others the gentleman under whose charge I should be happy to see him, and I am perfectly sensible of your very oblidging offer. Since Mr. Lewars wrote you I have been delivered of a son, who, as well as myself, are doing well. What you mention respecting my brother Gilbert is what accords with my own opinion, and every respect shall be paid to your advice.—Dr. Sir, with the greatest respect and regard, your much oblidged friend.

Finally, we have an interesting letter from Burns's friend, William Nicol, teacher at the Edinburgh High School, to "Mr. John Lewars, Officer of Excise, Dumfries," a letter to which Lockhart made some reference.

Edinburgh, Merchant Street,  
30th August, 1796.

DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to offer you my sincerest acknowledgements for the early intelligence, though of the most disagreeable and shocking nature, which you communicated to me, on occasion of the premature death of my dearly beloved Burns. I would have made them long before this time, if I

had been capable of writing. But I have been, ever since that time, confined in a great measure to my bed, and highly distressed by a jaundice, combined with some other complaints; but, thanks to God, I have now every mark of convalescence. I was obliged to retire from the town to country quarters at Stockbridge, where, except for an occasional visit to the town, I am determined to reside for some time.

Since the death of our friend, an oppressive gloom, as deep as the darkest shades of night, hangs over me; I can no longer view the face of nature with the same rapture; and social joy is blighted to me for ever. It gives me great pain to see that the encomiums passed upon him, both in the Scotch and English newspapers, are mingled with reproaches of the most indelicate and cruel nature. But stupidity and idiotcy rejoice, when a great and immortal genius falls; and they pour forth their invidious reflections without reserve, well knowing that the dead Lion, from whose presence they formerly scudded away with terror, and at whose voice they trembled through every nerve, can devour no more.

What has become of Burns's money? He certainly received £600 for the sale of the first edition of his poems, and £100 more for the copyright. He told me that he had advanced near £300 to his brother Gilbert, for the cultivation of his farm in Ayrshire. This affair ought to be strictly investigated, a settlement made, and, in case of non-payment, an assignation to the tack (?) granted to Mrs. Burns. I do not like the aspect of this affair. It is not improbable, such is the depravity of the human heart, that his avarice may tempt him to prefer his own interests to that of the large and unprovided family of his brother. Our friend might lose something by Ellisland, and a trifling sum by his illicit a——s, but still the disappearance of his money remains to be accounted for.

Give my most respectful compliments to Mr. Syme, and tell him, as the subscriptions are going on very slowly here, to write to Dr. John Moore, physician at London, who was a great admirer of Burns, to institute one there. A considerable sum, perhaps, might be procured. . . . (MS. torn) their head,

that dreadful burst of penitential sorrow issued from the breast of our friend before he expired. But if I am not much mistaken in relation to his firmness, he would disdain to have his dying moments disturbed with the sacerdotal gloom, and the sacerdotal bowl. I know he would negotiate wt God alone, concerning his immortal interests.

Give my best compliments to Mrs. Burns, and tell her I shall never (be) wanting to the interests of her (*sic.*) In a word my . . . (MS. torn) shall never see the like of Burns again. His p[owers?] constructed on a

slender, nay almost aerial basis, sho[wed] the most expansive vigour of genius. Where materials would have been wanting perhaps to almost every other mortal, [he] like an electrical kite, soars aloft, and draws down ethereal [fire] from heaven.—I am, dear sir, yours,  
WILL NICOL.

This letter gives us a not unpleasant view of Nicol ; but the suggestion of mean conduct on the part of Gilbert Burns is to be regretted. Gilbert would, if Mrs. Burns had allowed it, have sold off everything to pay his debt (Chambers, iv., 222).

## VI.—BURNS AT KIRKOSWALD.

BY J. A. WESTWOOD OLIVER.

REPRINTED FROM "MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE," JANUARY, 1893.

ALTHOUGH the number of Burns's published letters reaches the goodly total of between three and four hundred, there is one period in his life unrepresented by a single specimen ; a period too of exceptional interest, as it may be said to have marked the articulate birth of his poetic genius. I refer to the time immediately following his summer sojourn at the "smuggling village" of Kirkoswald, in his eighteenth year. He went to Kirkoswald, as he has told us in his fragment of autobiography, to attend a noted school there, and to learn something of mensuration, surveying, dialling, etc., studies incontinently interrupted, as it happened, by the discovery of a fair charmer in the garden contiguous to the school-house. On leaving Kirkoswald, he engaged several of his schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with him ; and he carried this whim so far, he says, "that though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger." Every scrap of his voluminous correspondence has been lost, although he kept copies of such of his own letters as pleased him. Not even the industry of Mr. Scott Douglas, who has crowned the labours of all previous collectors and annotators of Burns with his six partly volumes, has succeeded in

finding a trace of it. But some time ago there came into my possession a letter, addressed to one of the aforesaid schoolfellows, which may perhaps be regarded as a belated number of the series, and which in any case is interesting as an example of the poet's early epistolary style. It is dated 1782, six years after the visit to Kirkoswald, and is addressed to Thomas Orr, of Park, near that place, a young farmer who was in the poet's confidence with regard to his juvenile love-affair, and who occasionally came over to Lochlie to assist the family. Mr. Douglas has printed two letters to this individual ; one an extremely laconic communication from William Burns, the poet's father, relative to the shearing (dated September 8th, 1780), and the other a short letter from the poet himself on the more interesting subject of Miss Peggy Thomson. As the letter is dated November 11th, 1784, it would seem that the "charming fillette," who upset his trigonometry in 1776, had a more enduring hold on his susceptible heart than most of his early loves. In chronological order the following letter immediately succeeds the five letters to Miss Ellison Begbie and the one written by the poet while at Irvine to his father, and therefore ranks among the earliest of his letters extant.



DEAR THOMAS,—I am to blame for not returning you an answer sooner to your kind letter. But such has been the backwardness of our harvest, and so seldom are we at Ayr that I have scarcely had one opportunity of sending a line to you. I was extremely delighted with your letter. I love to see a man who has a mind superior to the world and the world's men, a man who, conscious of his own integrity, and at peace with himself, despises the censures and opinions of the unthinking rabble of mankind. The distinction of a poor man and a rich man is something indeed, but it is nothing to the difference between either a wise man or a fool, or a man of honour and a knave.

"What is't to me, a Passenger, God wot,  
Whether my vessel be first-rate or not;  
The ship itself may make a better figure,  
But I who sail am neither less nor bigger."  
—POPE.

I have nothing further to say to you but go on and prosper, and if you miss happiness by enjoyment you will find it by contented resignation. Write me soon and let me know how you are to be disposed of during the winter, and believe me to be ever your sincere friend,

ROBERT BURNS.

LOCHLIE, Nov. 17th, 1782.

There can be no doubt about the genuineness of this letter. Apart from the handwriting, which is easily recognisable, it bears the stamp of Burns in every line. But I may as well relate its history. It came into my father's possession, among other papers relating to the poet, about fifty years ago. He was then schoolmaster of the "noted school" of Kirkoswald, and I believe the documents were given to him by the relatives or descendants of Thomas Orr. The packet originally contained two or three of the poet's letters, a letter from his father William Burns, and some scraps of paper with verses written on them. What has become of the other letter (or letters) from Burns I do not know, unless it was returned to the surviving kinsfolk of Thomas Orr in Ayrshire; but the letter from his father is now in the possession of Dr. David Murray of Glasgow.

Any poetical pieces found in association with letters from Burns necessarily excite some lively hopes, for it was the habit of the

poet all his life long to send copies of his lyrics to correspondents up and down the country. The verses, however, to which I have referred as being tied up with the letters, are clearly not of that order. They are in the handwriting (presumably) of Thomas Orr, and on one of the leaves appears Thomas Orr's signature. The obvious conclusion is that Orr must have been himself a rhymist, and I would fain have remained satisfied with that conclusion, as my late father did; but there are some considerations which point to the suspicion (if nothing more) that one of the pieces may be a copy, made by Orr, of some juvenile effort of Burns's own muse. Love and poetry were ever, with him, in the close relationship of cause and effect. All his best lyrics were inspired by one or the other of the numberless goddesses who successively ruled his fickle heart, from sonsie Nelly Kilpatrick downwards. This Nelly Kilpatrick, who helped him to bind sheaves in the harvest-field, was his calf-love, and to her he made his first song, written at the age of fifteen, the one beginning,

"O once I loved a bonnie lass."

His first real attachment, however, so far as history relates, was inspired by the charms and accidental proximity of Peggy Thomson at Kirkoswald, and the circumstances of its birth had better be given in his own words: "I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo,—a month which is always a carnival in my bosom—when a charming filette, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,—

' . . . Like Proserpine gathering flowers,  
Herself a fairer flower. . . . '

It was vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I stayed I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guilt-



less." (*Autobiographical Letter to Dr. Moore*, 1787.) Although he "crazed the faculties of his soul" about her, it has not hitherto been supposed that his frenzy bore immediate fruit in verse. The fine song beginning,

"Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns  
Bringing autumn's pleasant weather,"

while, on the poet's own confession, inspired by this nymph of the garden, and founded on a previous rough draft which may or may not have been contemporaneous with the episode, was not written until the year 1783, at which time he seems to have experienced a revival of his old sentiment for the damsel. In the narrative describing the circumstances of his meeting with Peggy Thomson, it will be observed that she was "like Proserpine gathering flowers, herself a fairer flower," and that he speaks in enthusiastic terms of her "modesty and innocence." It is therefore at least curious that these attributes should give their "note" to the following highly floral verses:—

"Serene is the morn, the lark leaves his nest  
And sings a salute to the dawn,  
The sun with a splendour embroiders the east  
And brightens the dew on the lawn.  
Whilst the sons of debauch to indulgence give way  
And slumber the prime of their hours,  
Let us, my dear Stella, the garden survey  
And make our remarks on the flowers.  
The gay gaudy tulip observe as you walk,  
How flaunting the gloss on its vest,  
How proud and how stately it stands on its stalk  
In beauty's diversity drest.  
From the rose, the carnation, the pink and the clove,  
What odours incessantly spring,—  
The south wafts a richer perfume to the grove  
As he brushes the leaves with his wing.  
Apart from the rest, in her purple array,  
The violet humbly retreats;  
In modest concealment she peeps on the day,  
Yet none can excel her in sweets.  
So humble, that though with unparalleled grace  
She might e'en a palace adorn,  
She oft in a hedge hides her innocent face,  
And grows at the foot of a thorn.  
So beauty, my fair one, is doubly refined  
When modesty brightens her charms,—  
When meekness like thine adds a gem to her mind,  
We long to be locked in her arms.  
Though Venus herself from her throne should descend,  
And the Graces await at her call,  
To thee the gay world would with preference bend,  
And hail thee the violet of all."

On reading these verses one is at once struck by their directness and simplicity, so different from the prevailing mode of the time. The songs and stanzas to be found in all the miscellanies and poetical keepsakes of popular vogue are stiff with an elaborate embroidery of personified attributes, Chloes, Strephons, Phyllises, and so forth. The writer therefore, whoever he may have been, must have tuned his lyre to the note of nature, an achievement by no means easy before Burns himself showed the way.

An examination of the verses in detail reveals one or two interesting points. In the second stanza we have the desperately prosaic lines,

"Let us, my dear Stella, the garden survey,  
And make our remarks on the flowers."

Burns's song, "Now westlin winds," as already remarked, was inspired and probably drafted at Kirkoswald, and in it we find a similar thought:

"Come let us stray our gladsome way,  
And view the charms of nature."

Compare also the first stanza above with this from Burns's "Lass of Cessnock Banks," written probably about 1780:

"She's sweeter than the morning dawn,  
When rising Phœbus first is seen;  
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;  
An' she has twa sparkling roguish e'en."

"The Ploughman's Life," given by Cromek as Burns's, begins,

"The lav'rock in the morning shall rise from her nest."

The authenticity of these lines, however, is disputed.

It may be worth remarking that Shenstone's "Rural Elegance" opens with the lines,

"While orient skies restore the day,  
And dewdrops catch the lucid ray,"

which are an ornate and Shenstonian version of

"The sun with splendour embroiders the east  
And brightens the dew on the lawn."

And oddly enough, during the summer at Kirkoswald, Shenstone was one of Burns's favourite authors. "I returned home," he says, "very considerably improved. My

reading was enlarged by the very important additions of Thomson's and Shenstone's works." To Shenstonian influence might also be ascribed, on the theory that Burns did write these verses, the most un-Burns-like address to "Stella." Burns generally (in his earlier songs invariably) hailed his heroines by their real name, Jean, Peggy, Nannie, Mary, etc., if he named them at all; but the elegant Shenstone would not have thought he was writing poetry unless he rechristened them with names having the sanction of classic usage. That Burns, at this early period, was not above the influence of his masters in verse, is proved by the circumstance that his stanzas, "I dreamed I lay where flowers were springing," the only known poetical product of his year at Kirkoswald, are a close imitation, both in sentiment and expression, of Mrs. Cockburn's "Flowers of the Forest," which appeared in several of the popular collections of songs about that time.

Once more, in the lines of the second verse, "Whilst the sons of debauch to indulgence give way  
And slumber the prime of their hours,"

we have a touch of local colour which is highly suggestive. Kirkoswald, at the time of the poet's sojourn, was notorious for smuggling and drunkenness, and he has recorded that although, "Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me. . . . I was no enemy to social life," and, "Here I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble." The idea of introducing a reference to drunken debauchery in a set of amatory verses would surely never have occurred to any one unless the debauchery was a very salient and aggressive feature of the neighbourhood.

I offer these suggestions for what they are worth. It is a comparatively easy matter to build up a case by citing resemblances and possible coincidences; but whatever value may be attached to the considerations I have stated, it must not be forgotten that these interesting verses were preserved in company with undoubtedly authentic letters of the poet and his father, that they are in the handwriting and were in the possession of a man who, so far as we know (and Burns's correspondence

with him would surely have given some hint of the fact had it been otherwise), was not himself a rhymers, and lastly that they apply with singular aptness to the heroine of the love affair in which this man was the poet's confidant.

In attempting to decide for or against Burns's authorship of the verses (an attempt which I do not make) it is necessary to bear in mind an alternative explanation of their origin. Mr. Alexander Smith, in his *Globe* edition of the poet's works, printed a curious "Elegy" which he found in the then recently recovered common-place book presented by Burns to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop. The Elegy, copied in the poet's handwriting, was introduced in these words: "The following poem is the work of some hapless unknown son of the Muses, who deserved a better fate. There is a great deal of 'The Voice of Cana' in his solitary mournful notes; and had the sentiments been clothed in Shenstone's language, they would have been no discredit even to that elegant poet." Between the Elegy and the verses I have given there is no intrinsic resemblance, beyond the occurrence in both of the name "Stella." Burns might have got the name "Stella" (Swift's works do not appear to have been included in his early reading) from this poem, which seems to have been a favourite with him; but on the other hand, he and his friend Orr may have had access in common to some collection of verses, now unknown, from which they each drew their extracts. Were the resemblance between the two pieces closer, this theory would be an extremely plausible one. As it is, the possibility of such an explanation has to be taken into account.

The second manuscript, a scrap of roughly ruled music-paper with the writing on the back, presents a problem which is to me insolvable. It is in the same handwriting as the other manuscript, but while the spelling in that is correct, in this it is abominable. The lines are described as "An Elegy on Archibald, Duke of Argyle, who died at London, 15th of April, 1761." Now as Thomas Orr was born in that very year 1761, it is obvious that, the Elegy cannot be his, or that it must have been composed a considerable time after the Duke's death. Here are

the lines exactly as they stand, innocent of punctuation :—

“ A solemn dirge ye bage pipes blow  
 Let hills and dales resound the woe  
 Ye rocks who guard the western shore  
 Your potentat Duk is now no mor  
 Snach'd off by death when ripe in years  
 His mem'ry claims his countrys tears  
 A stets man great and good likewies  
 Among the unthinkin dead now lies  
 No mor hil schem his countrys well  
 No mor at court our plaints hell tell  
 No more hell spend the silent night  
 To meditate his contrys right  
 No mor for Scotland hell provide  
 Nor by sage counsel Britain guide  
 His politics now at an end  
 Nor mor his country will defend.”

The existence of such an illiterate production, in Thomas Orr's hand-writing, is hardly reconcilable with the authorship of the lines to Stella ; and the only interest of the paper lies in the indirect evidence it affords that its neighbour, though bearing Orr's name, must have been a copy of the work of another pen.

It may not be amiss to note, in conclusion, as bearing upon the probability of some of Burns's early work being still undiscovered, that he distinctly indicates the existence of many rhymes written before his twenty-third year, which had not been given to the world in his own day, and which have not been discovered since. In the oft-quoted letter to Dr. Moore, he says : “ My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. . . . Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half-a-dozen or more pieces on hand ; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme ; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet ! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except ‘ Winter : a dirge,’ the eldest of my printed pieces ; ‘ The Death of Poor Maillie,’ ‘ John Barleycorn,’ and Songs first, second and third.” Clearly “ half-a-dozen or more pieces on the stocks at once,” points to a degree of productiveness in his youthful days of which we have but scant record in his surviving works.

Almost all our knowledge of the sojourn at Kirkoswald is drawn from Burns's own allusions to it in the letter to Dr. Moore. The very date of it has become surrounded by some uncertainty and confusion, not through any want of clearness in Burns's own statement on the point, but through the difficulty of reconciling different parts of his somewhat incoherent narrative. Burns distinctly says that he spent his “ seventeenth summer ” at the “ noted school,” and as he was born in January, 1759, his seventeenth “ summer,” corresponding to his eighteenth year, was in 1776, the year previous to the “ flitting ” of the family from Mount Oliphant, near Ayr, to the larger farm of Lochlie in the parish of Tarbolton. Dr. Currie altered “ seventeenth ” to “ nineteenth or twentieth,” to suit his own chronology ; and Gilbert Burns, the poet's brother, seems to have been a pliable witness in the matter of dates. The period was an exceedingly important one in the young poet's mental development, and it held even more important issues in the subsequent career of the man. It gave the lad his first experience of independence and of emancipation from the rigid rule of the home. It introduced him for the first time to scenes of noisy conviviality and good fellowship, in which he was nothing loath (and was for the time being free) to join ; thus it may be laying the basis of the habit that was destined to darken with its shadow the whole course of his after life. It saw the stirrings of literary ambition, and the production of one or two of his earliest lyrics. And, finally, it culminated in the first of those love-paroxysms that continued to disturb his peace and upset his philosophy almost to the last, and that played such an extraordinary part in the expression of his lyric genius. Fortunate it is, therefore, that a period so fateful has not been left altogether without record. The poet's account of it is all too brief and shadowy, but as no other evidence is available, we must perforce be content.

Kirkoswald (locally called Kirkos'l) is no longer a scene of “ roaring dissipation and swaggering riot,” but a singularly quiet, peaceful, law-abiding village. It has preserved its old-world aspect to this day, and beyond sobering down to respectability and obscurity,



is probably much the same place that Burns knew in 1776. According to Chambers, who made his researches on the spot, the classes which Burns attended were temporarily held (owing to the destruction of the proper school-house) in a house in the main street of the village, opposite the church-yard. Each house is provided with a long strip of garden, or kail-yard, running up the slope at the back, and it was here that the young poet espied, on the other side of the fence, the "Proserpine gathering flowers," of his lively fancy. The practical Chambers surmises that the damsel was more likely engaged in cutting a cabbage for the family dinner. The

school (rebuilt) now stands at the end of the straggling village street. A sedate and prosperous-looking farm-steading bears the name of "Shanter," but beyond the name it would seem to have no connection with the home of the immortal "Tam," which has completely disappeared.\*

Burns's stay at Kirkoswald was too short and uneventful to endow the spot with the associations dear to pilgrims. Keats visited it in the course of his walking tour in 1818, but very few of the ordinary tourists in the "Land of Burns" so much as know its name, and fewer still disturb its peaceful quiet.

## VII.—BURNS' BIRTHDAY SONG.

BY ALEXANDER LOWSON.

WE homage pay to patriots true,  
Who for our good would shed their gore.  
We honour give to warriors too,  
Who keep the foe from Scotia's shore.  
We all adore the statesmen great  
Who steer the realm thro' ocean's wild,—  
Then let us not forget the debt  
We owe to Scotia's darling child.

*Chorus*—Then let us welcome aye the day,  
His natal day as it returns,  
The 25th o' Januar' grey,  
That saw the birth o' Robbie Burns.

He taught us songs o' magic worth,  
Of love and truth and manhood strong,  
Now freedom circles round the earth  
Embalmed in matchless Robbie's song.

His "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled"  
Made tyrants tremble in his day,  
And Freedom proudly lifts her head,  
Inspired by Robin's matchless lay.

*Chorus*—Then let us, etc.

The loves, the joys o' lowly swains  
He painted true beyond compare.  
While blood flows through our Scottish veins  
We'll sing these sangs o' genius rare;  
While mountains wear their caps o' snow,  
While flowerets bloom or birdies sing,  
While grass grows green, or Boreas blaw,  
We'll honour Scotia's Poet King.

*Chorus*—Then let us, etc.

\* A controversy has recently arisen regarding the original of this famous character. All commentators have taken it for granted that the poet's model was one Douglas Graham, a Kirkoswald farmer of convivial habits, who often on his way home from Ayr passed Alloway Kirk in the condition of the luckless Tam. Graham himself is said to have acknowledged the portrait. A rival claimant has however been discovered in the person of a labourer named Thomas Reid, who early in the century worked on the estate of the late Mr. Lee-Harvey at Lochwinnoch. This man, who came from Ayrshire, seems to have passed among his contemporaries for the veritable Tam. It is difficult to see how at this time of day the matter can be satisfactorily decided; nor indeed is it of any real importance.



## VIII.—TRANSLATIONS OF BURNS.

BY J. YOUNG.

REPRINTED FROM THE "GLASGOW HERALD."

TRANSLATIONS of Burns in a complete form are but few, whilst foreign renderings of his songs and ballads or detached pieces are by no means so numerous as might be expected. These translations, such as they are, have not attracted much attention in this country, where, indeed, they are comparatively unknown. This fact was pretty conclusively shewn by the interest evinced some months ago on the appearance of an article in the *Herald* treating of De Wailly's French translation, a work which, although published half a century ago, evidently possessed the charm of novelty for not a few. From the correspondence which in due course followed the publication of the article it was apparent that the subject is one of no little interest, and this present anniversary may perhaps offer a fitting opportunity for further comment on the difficulties which the translator has to encounter in attempting to reproduce the Scottish poet in a foreign idiom.

With regard to De Wailly's "Burns," it is now somewhat late in the day to enter into the question of its merits or demerits. Whether the adoption of literal blank verse were the best or not for a French translation, it certainly is the easiest; but what would Burns have thought of the matter? From what he has repeatedly said in his correspondence regarding his method of composition—and to this subject further reference will presently be made—there can be no doubt that our poet would have been much pained, to put it suavely, on beholding his works in this French guise.

Carlyle, in the course of some rather favourable comments on Heintze's German translation, wrote:—"Perhaps the one counsel I would venture to give Herr Heintze were this; in all cases *to learn the tune first*." And Burns himself says:—"Until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I can never compose for it." "Burns in French," judged by this standard, is an impossibility. In German the thing is

feasible to some extent; in fact, over a score of more or less competent translators have produced versions in that language adapted to the tunes with which the songs are identified in the original. But a knowledge of the tune is not enough. Carlyle evidently did not think it needful to observe that such knowledge should be supplemented by an exact understanding of the meaning of the words, yet, judging by results, this additional recommendation were by no means superfluous. A pitfall for the translator of Burns is found in those words, which, although common to English and Scots, have not always the same meaning. For instance, some time ago a Burns enthusiast, writing in these columns, rejected as spurious a third verse of "Of a' the airts," on account of Jean's being therein somewhat prosaically described as "neat and clean," an expression which—according to the writer—Burns would have studiously avoided. Nevertheless, in the song "O, were I on Parnassus' hill!" the line is found:—

"Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean."

And on referring to the glossarial index of the Globe edition it will be seen that "clean" here means "handsome." Should the foreigner err in such a case as this he is to be excused. The true meaning of this word did not escape De Wailly, who renders the expression, "*tes membres si élégants*." Heintze avoids the apparently objectionable allusion by substituting "round," "dein Bein so rund," but other German translators keep clear of it by periphrase; Laun, for example, has—"Den Mund so roth, den Wuchs so fein." "Ca" is another case in point, and in "Ca' the yowes to the knowes" De Wailly has been tripped by this word. His rendering:

"Appelle les brebis sur les hauteurs,"

shows that he has mistaken "ca" for "call," but in this he is not alone. Laun translates it—

"Ruf' die Lämmer auf die Weide,  
Ruf' sie zur beblühten Haide,  
Lass an's Bächlein gehn uns beide,  
Komm, mein süßes Mädchen."

Otto Baisch also renders the line, "Ruf' die Lämmer," but no Scotsman required to be told that "Ca' the yowes" means "*drive* the ewes," as correctly translated by Heintze—"Treib die Schafe nach dem Ried." And Legerlotz—whose German translation of Burns's songs, published two or three years ago, contains a considerable number done into dialectical form—has reproduced not only the right meaning of "ca'" but also the double rhyme of the first line—

"Treib zum Bühl dei Schofsgewühl!  
Heid und Moos gibt Weid und Pfühl,  
Und das Brünkli rauscht so kühl,  
Schätzli, mei treueigons."

"Ca'" is used elsewhere by Burns in this same sense. In "The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie" the farmer is told he should never tie up his sheep,

"But ca' them out to park or hill,"

and in this instance De Wailly gives the correct rendering—"Mais de les mener au parc ou à la montagne," but the occurrence of "ca'" in the compound word "new-ca'd" (*i.e.*, newly driven) in the opening line of one of the Epistles to John Lapraik, has led the translator to give a rendering which is likely to be novel to most of the poet's readers. The line,

"While new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake."

is translated, "Tandis que les vaches qui viennent de vèler mugissent au poteau"—that is, "While the cows which have just calved low at the stake!" Of course there is authority of a sort for this strange reading of the word—Cuthbertson's Glossary, for instance—or the idea would probably not have occurred to De Wailly, but until it be shown that calving is confined to the "hour on e'enin's edge" it may confidently be asserted that "new-calved" for "new-ca'd" in this stanza is a flagrant absurdity. But this is perhaps excelled by Laun's rendering of the well-known lines in the "Cotter's Saturday Night"—

"But now the supper crowns their simple board,  
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food:"

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which are delightfully mistranslated as follows:—

"Schon lädt die Tafel ein zum kleinen Mahle  
Mit einem Rebhuhn, wie's dem Scotten frommt,"

where "parritch" is translated "partridge!" *Toujours perdrix* with a vengeance. The *fours errors* is evidently the apparent similarity of the word to the Scots "paitrick." But what could the translator have been thinking about? He must surely have known that the Scots, in Burns's time at least, were more accustomed to a daily dose of stirabout than to the diurnal partridge. Laun is also responsible for the lines:—

"Mein Vater war ein Bauersmann,  
Wo Carricks Fluahen Wogen,"

where "Upon the Carrick border" is rather poetically mistranslated "Where Carrick's waters surge."

In a letter to G. Thomson, Burns stated that it was his way to consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to his idea of the musical expression, then to chose his theme. This letter contained the manuscript of "Auld Lang Syne," which Burns terms "a song of the olden times"—a definition which should not be lost sight of by intending translators. "The song," says the poet, "has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing." Notwithstanding this assertion, the second, third, and fourth verses are attributed to Burns himself. Now, in view of the circumstances in which the song was composed the Gallic idea lately expressed in the *Herald* that it were best done into French "by adopting a somewhat humorous style" does not strike the Scot as it strikes the stranger. "Auld Lang Syne" humorous! Fancy a compatriot of the author of "L'Ami MacDonald" imagining that a couple of "auld acquaintance" should not be in dead earnest in contemplating the banging of the price of a couple of pints, although, as has been pointed out somewhere, the singer, with national canniness, suggests that his companion should take the initiative in the matter of finance,

"And surely ye'll be your pint stoup,  
And surely I'll be mine."

These lines are rendered by De Wailly:—

"Et à coup sûr vous tiendrez votre pinte,  
Et à coup sûr je tiendrai la mienne,"

in which, said a critic, "the translator has caught the idea completely." Now, these French lines mean simply that "we twa" intend to pledge each other glass in hand, which, it need hardly be said, is not the generally accepted reading of the original.

The difficulty—if not the impossibility—of writing such a translation of Burns's songs as would have satisfied the poet may perhaps be estimated from the following remark contained in a letter which he wrote to G. Thomson on 1st December, 1792:—

" ' For Nature made her what she is,  
And never made anither.' (Such a person as she is.)

This is, in my opinion, more poetic than 'Ne'er made sic anither.'" He adds, it is true, that it is immaterial, but the observation, taken in conjunction with what has already been said as to his method of composition, shows the futility of endeavouring to reproduce Burns's songs in a *French* dress whilst preserving the metrical form of the original. The two methods of metrical translations of the first verse of one of Burns's *English* songs, "My Heart's in the Highlands." The first is a fair example of Laun's German translation; the other, in Italian, was published in a Milan paper some time ago, and was reproduced by *Notes and Queries* with the remark that it seemed to be extremely well done:—

"MEIN HERZ IST IM HOCHLAND.

Mein Herz ist im Hochland, mein Herz ist nicht hier,  
Mein Herz ist im Hochland und jagt im Revier.  
Es jagt dort im Walde und folget dem Reh;  
Mein Herz ist im Hochland, wohin ich auch geh.' "

"IL MIO CUORE E SUI MONTI.

Vola a' miei monti il cor nè mai qui resta,  
Vola a' miei monti il cor del cervo a caccia,  
Vola il cervo a cacciar della foresta,

De capriuolo ad inseguir la traccia :

Ovunque io l' orme imprima  
Sempre il mio core è de' miei monti in cima."

In the first of these instances the song can be sung to the tune for which it was composed; in the other this is of course impracticable, the Italian version being cast in what appeared to the translator the form in which the best poetical expression could be obtained. The result is a charming translation of the song, but the translated song is not Burns. It may be mentioned by the way that the original of the stanza just quoted is said to have been taken from a small ditty entitled "The Strong Walls of Derry." Whilst Burns in French must be regarded as an impossibility, it cannot be said that Teutonic translations altogether satisfactory are to be met with. Is it even possible to translate Burns's Scottish songs into English? One of his German translators believes that much of the charm of Burns's poetry is due to the exuberance of endearing diminutives in the Scottish language, and this difficulty, insuperable to the English translator, is almost as insurmountable to the German.

In the course of the correspondence resulting from the article already referred to, a writer blamed De Wailly for having inserted in his translation four lines which Burns himself wished to be forgotten. Seeing that the writer not only reproduced the lines, but also pointed out where the original might be consulted, the purpose of the objection is not very evident. In any case De Wailly should have got credit *per contra* for the omission on page 279 of eight lines which are very much more objectionable than those to which exception had been taken.

## IX.—SONG FOR A BURNS ANNIVERSARY.

BY WILLIAM THOMSON.

He came to us when Scotland's bards  
Had lost their manly tone;  
When Scotland's nobles sought rewards  
For flattery of a throne;  
And raised them to a purpose high,  
In songs the world will ne'er let die.

What truth and tenderness combine;  
What power and pathos in each line;  
What varied subjects claim his dreams;  
The banks and braes, the flowing streams,  
The little mouse, the piping thrush,  
The daisy 'neath the ploughshares crush!  
The love of brither, bard and frien',



The love of Mary and bonny Jean,  
The scene in cottage home at night  
That sets the lamp of love alight,  
His heart was love, his strains reveal  
He had no hate e'en for the Diel.

Not in the little land alone  
That gave the poet birth ;  
His songs are sung, his name is known  
O'er all the sea-girt earth.  
Across the broad Atlantic's wave ;  
In lands Pacific waters lave ;  
And from these distant climes,  
Men who have loved his rhymes,  
Have to the little green churchyard  
With reverent footsteps come,  
And with low bending head,  
In loving sorrow shed  
A tributary tear upon our Burns's tomb.  
Since first he saw the light,  
Long years have ta'en their flight,  
And wrong has striven with right,  
And battles have been fought, and lost, and won,  
And the earth has less of night and more of sun  
But the bright laurel green  
Around his brow, is brighter now  
Than it in all the years gone by has been.

Come, then, all loyal-hearted Scots,  
"From Maidenkirke to John o' Groats"  
On this our poet's natal day, and worship at  
his shrine,  
Sing loud his never dying lays,  
And weave of everlasting bays  
A newer wreath around his noble temples to  
entwine ;  
And sing his name and deathless fame  
When the Januar' winds are sighing.  
The Bard is dead, his soul has fled,  
But his song is never dying.

While breezes soft the sweet blue bell shall  
woo ;  
While on our moors upstirs the sturdy  
thistle ;  
While at the gates of heaven the laverock's  
whistle ;  
While woman trusts to man, and man is true ;  
While o'er the "Banks and braes o' Bonny  
Doon"  
The rich-songed mavis darts ;  
While heather scents the smiling summer  
noon,  
Will Burns live in our hearts ;  
And ever as his natal day returns,  
Our hearts will tribute pay to glorious Burns.

### X.—THE PROSE OF BURNS.

FROM "THE SCOTSMAN," DECEMBER 10, 1887.

It is hardly wrong to say that Burns knew good English only from books, and practised it only on paper. He was not in the way of hearing it spoken, and he was not in the habit of speaking it. It was comparatively unknown to him as speech. He was never in England to make profitable acquaintance with it as a living language, and the educated Englishman, visiting Scotland, did not often bring the sound of it to his ear. The cultured of his own country, with whom for one brief season he occasionally associated, did not speak it, we may venture to say, as purely as they wrote it—a jealous Englishman might add that they did not always write it quite purely either. Certainly they professed a great belief in English as the distinctive

speech of good society, and in their exalted moods rather despised the vernacular as little other than a pagan *patois* ; but one has the suspicion that they put on their high English with their company clothes, and found relief and a sense of freedom in putting it off again. Even while allowing that Mackenzie, Stewart, Robertson, Blair, and Greenfield spoke English as well as they wrote it, we may yet venture to believe that Edinburgh society a hundred years ago practised a mode of speech which was no nearer to good English than French of Stratford-atte-Bow to French of Paris. The vocabulary in fashionable use might be mainly English, but Scottish idioms would abound, and the northern accent be all-prevailing.



Whatever the state of "society" language in Edinburgh in 1786-7, the influence of Burns himself was, so far, adverse to the use of English, and in favour of Scottish word and idiom. He came willingly to learn of fashionable society the speech of England, and found himself their teacher giving them lessons in the use of their mother-tongue. They listened, applauded, quoted him. He arrested for a time the slow and irregular revolution that was going on in the native speech, and made the native speech temporarily fashionable. His "poems in the Scottish dialect" seasoned the talk of the town. "The language that I had begun to despise as fit for nothing but colloquial vulgarity seemed to be transformed by the sorcery of genius into the genuine language of poetry. It expressed every idea with a brevity and force, and bent itself to every subject with a pliancy in which the most perfect languages often fail." These were the words of an educated contemporary of Burns, and they expressed the feeling and the judgment of every cultured Scotsman who read the poems.

It is more especially true of the youth of Burns, that his knowledge of English was practically and almost solely derived from books. Those who influenced him in the pursuit of this knowledge were his father, his schoolmaster, and a few of his schoolfellows. From none of them could he derive much direct help in the formation of a good style of English composition. His father's conversation, no doubt, stimulated him to a habit of vigorous and independent thought, which was not without its value, but the bent of mind of the elder Burns was toward the exact sciences, amongst which we may include Calvinistic divinity, and turned but little, if at all, towards the elegancies and refinements of artistic expression. It was with facts and ideas the old man dealt: words and phrases were no more to him than the mere wrappers of thought, to be flung aside on receipt of the parcel. His hard life seems to have taken all the poetry, and all the feeling for it, out of his nature. To the charm of literary grace he was probably insensible. The influence of the lad Murdoch upon the education of Burns was considerably more to the purpose.

His *method*, so far as it went, was good. It was enlightened beyond the general practice of his own and many a subsequent day. It may be questioned, indeed, whether the most approved modern method of dealing with an English classic in our junior schools is much in advance of Murdoch's. He taught his pupils to re-arrange rhetorical inversions in the natural order of prose, to express the original in a paraphrase of their own words, and to recite the more poetical passages. The value of the method, like the value of a tool, would be, however, in its application. To produce the best results it would require knowledge, discrimination, and taste in the teacher. Whether young Murdoch was possessed of these qualifications in any noteworthy degree may be doubted. It should be remembered that he was only some seventeen or so when he was engaged by William Burns, in a hostelry in the town of Ayr, to teach the little school of five families at Alloway. Under his tuition the boy Robert Burns became acquainted with a large number of English words, stored his memory with numerous quotations, and learned to express himself with fluency. He also learned the rules of grammar, and made such proficiency in the fruitless exercise of *parsing* as to become—so he tells us himself with some self-complacency—quite an adept in "substantives, verbs, and particles" before he was ten. All this schoolboy proficiency had but slight bearing on the art of composition.

The influence of his schoolfellows began after schooldays were over, and was communicated in the course of a correspondence with them on subjects of a literary nature. The lads formed themselves into a kind of Corresponding Essay Club. None of this correspondence has been preserved. It was in full stream when Burns was about seventeen or eighteen. "I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far that, though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger." The chief value of this correspondence was the

encouragement it gave him to persevere in the slow and laborious art of English composition, by convincing him that he was a much superior letter-writer to any of his correspondents.

In short, the best thing that his school-life could do for him was to introduce him to English authors of repute, and leave him to learn from them. But it is not by the interrupted study of a silent language that a master's grasp of that language is soon, if at all, to be attained. The best teacher is the living model; and constant exercise of tongue and pen, in his presence, and subject to his correction, is the natural and speediest means to the acquisition of a free and fair use of any language. This is the advantage that most English writers, whom we regard as classical, have had. It was an advantage denied to Burns. If his prose be judged severely on its merits, more than half of it will be found to be undeniably good, and much of it excellent English. But let the deficiencies and disadvantages of his training receive due emphasis, and the qualities of force, freedom, and grace in the prose expression of Burns become indeed phenomenal.

The first book to awaken Burns's mind to a consciousness of style was Mason's "English Collection." The poet tells us, in the longest as it is one of the best pieces of his own prose, how the first bit of English literature to give him pleasure was the "Vision of Mirza." It was Addison, too, and not a native author, that was his first favourite in poetry; and it is significant of the religious atmosphere in which he was bred that the poem which sounded the earliest music in his boyish ears was the hymn beginning "How are thy servants blessed, O Lord!" Addison, then, was the first of the recognised masters of style to influence the composition of Burns. But Addison belonged to a school of which, if he was not the head master, he was at least one of the most distinguished representatives. To the same school, but with variations of style which clearly differentiated them from each other, were Steele, Sterne, Swift, MacKenzie, Pope, Goldsmith and Shenstone, Thomson and Young, all of whom were devotedly studied by Burns, some of them extravagantly admired, and, especially in the

earlier half of his correspondence, rapturously, if somewhat stiffly, imitated. His reading was not by any means confined to these authors, but these were his accepted masters, after whom he moulded his phrases and modelled his periods. He was not alone in regarding them with feelings which, amounting as they did almost to reverence, are a great puzzle to the present age. The universal feeling at the close of last century was that there was but one style of prose in the history of English literature, and that was the style which is associated with the name of Addison. There was no good prose before he wrote, and there could be no good prose in the future that was not shaped in the pattern of his. The English language on its prose side had received its ultimate development; it had no capabilities beyond the point it had reached—fondly believed to be the point of perfection; the forces of nature and art combined could go no further in the composition of artistic English prose. It was the English Augustan age, and as it could never be excelled, the utmost that could be done was to maintain and continue it. Even if he had been an Englishman, with a full native inheritance of the language, it would have been natural for Burns to feel and to be influenced by the prevalent opinion; but, born as he was in a Scottish cottage, a son of the people, and knowing English only at second-hand, and with much of the feeling of a foreigner, it was inevitable that he should be carried away by the general belief that the wits of Queen Anne's reign were the only possible, the imperative models of a classical style of English prose. His desire to imitate them was thus a justifiable one; and the charge of affectation, so often brought against him, falls to the ground. Burns, like his age, consciously followed his models, and made no secret of the imitation. There was no insincerity in his style. He had no other to begin with. As time passed, experience of life and constant exercise in composition purified his style; he became a clever disciple of the Queen Anne School—he was always a respectable one—and was developing a style of his own, specimens of which may stand to his credit alongside the best work of the best English letter-writers,

when he was cut off prematurely in the middle of his thirty-eighth year.

The history of his style divides into three, or perhaps four, pretty well defined periods. The first period ends in the spring of 1786. It was the most eventful, the critical year of his life. Previous to this his prose productions were, at best, clever imitations of his models. The next period extends to near the close of the *Clarinda* correspondence. It is characterised by great inequalities of style, but gives unmistakeable proof—notably in the biographical letter to Dr. Moore—of having attained to something very like mastery of an expressive, vigorous, and manly style. The *Clarinda* correspondence gave greater freedom and flexibility to his pen, and, after developing a phase of unusual turgidity of expression, left him in possession of a remarkably clear, pure, and nervous style, of which the following extract will serve as a specimen :—

“When we wish to be economists in happiness, we ought, in the first place, to fix the standard of our own character; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property; and those who doubt or seem to deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices or despise their judgment. I know you will say this is self-conceit; but I call it self-knowledge. The one is the over-weening opinion of a fool who fancies himself to be what he wishes himself to be thought; the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay, the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.”

The next period includes his frankest letters—the letters which, upon the whole, show him at his best as a writer. He is now seldom self-conscious, writes with a readier

pen, and in an easier and more worthy style. This period goes down to the time when he first perceived the shadowy premonitions of ruin, and felt the hopelessness of averting it. The last is a short period, in which he wrote little—he had little heart to write—and put much into small compass. The last letter that he wrote—it was the last production of his pen—is typical of the short series which it closes :—

“I returned from sea-bathing quarters to-day. My medical friends would almost persuade me I am better; but I think, and feel, that my strength is so gone that the disorder will prove fatal to me.—Your son-in-law,  
“R.B.”

The stern, calm bravery, in view of the last enemy, which breathes in this brief note, is in startling contrast to the semi-hysterical sentences which precede our quotation, and which furnish the occasion of the letter.

The discrepancy of opinion pronounced ostensibly on the style of Burns's letters by judges of acknowledged reputation is one of the marvels of our critical literature. It is, perhaps, to a large extent, traceable to the insufficient discrimination of the substance of the letters from the style. The critics may be separated into four classes—first, those who declare that all his letters were composed as exercises, and for display; second, those who declare that they are the best ever written, and always sympathetic and sincere; third, those who declare that all their blemishes are due to his correspondents, and all their beauties to himself; and last, those who declare that the blemishes are his own, but that they are the exception and not the rule. With the last decision—it is Carlyle's—all kindly readers will, and all candid readers must, agree. It is a remarkable fact that to common people, ignorant of the subtleties of style and unconscious of conventionalism, the letters of Burns are scarcely less interesting than his poetry. It is the matter alone that engages and enchains their attention.



## XI.—“PAISLEY BURNS CLUBS.”\*

*By PROFESSOR J. CLARK MURRAY, MONTREAL.*

FROM THE “SCOTTISH AMERICAN JOURNAL.”

THE historians of the future ought to be in a much better position than the historians of former days for giving the interest of local colouring to their pictures of provincial life. An immense amount of literary labour has been undertaken during the present generation in preserving any records that are extant of provincial history all over the civilized world. In this useful work Scotland has certainly not been behind other countries; and among Scotchmen who have devoted themselves to this kind of research there is perhaps no man who has rendered such multifarious service as ex-Provost Brown of Paisley. He has given his townsmen a history of their native place which is not only by far the completest on the subject, but is in many respects a model of what a local history should be. He has also written an elaborate history of the ancient Grammar School of the town, founded by James VI.—a work which contains a mass of curious information in regard to the educational history of Scotland. To Mr. Brown, moreover, Paisley owes some valuable editions of local poets, accompanied with interesting memoirs which have rescued from unmerited neglect a number of humble, but not undeserving, workers in the field of literature. And now in the fairly-won leisure of a long and industrious life he returns once more to his favourite researches by giving his townsmen a history of the clubs which have originated to commemorate the great national poet.

Of course in such a history there must be a great deal that is only of local interest. But I venture to say that there is many a page in it which will be read with eagerness by all who have associations with the locality on account of its pleasing reminiscences of many men whose names have been familiar during the past two or three generations. Incidentally, also, the book, dealing with a poet of world-wide fame, introduces a great deal of matter

that is of interest apart from its local associations. One point with which the reader is at once impressed in glancing through the work is the early period at which Burns's countrymen had recognised that his greatness was such as to justify the formation of local clubs for the purpose of cherishing his memory. The poet died July 21st, 1796, and the records of the first Burns club in Paisley begin with the commemoration of his birthday on the evening of January 29th, 1805,—about eight years and a half after his death. It would be interesting to know if there is any record of an earlier celebration of the poet's birthday elsewhere; and probably the readers of *THE SCOTTISH-AMERICAN* would receive with pleasure any information on the subject. The celebration at Paisley is peculiarly interesting in view of the fact that the minutes of the meeting, with the exception of the President's address, are in the handwriting of Tannahill, who has engrossed a poem of his own written for the occasion. Tannahill was evidently, therefore, one of the principal originators of this club, but he found a number of extremely willing coadjutors. The president, William McLaren, was an author of some note in his time, for whom Tannahill showed his esteem by dedicating to him the collection of his poems published two years afterwards. Mr. McLaren's address on proposing the toast of the evening—“The Memory of Our Immortal Bard, Robert Burns”—is justly deemed worthy of preservation by Mr. Brown. It had been published at the time in pamphlet form. Among the others present at this early celebration there is one name that deserves a special mention—that of Robert A. Smith. Smith was, by mere accident of birth born in England. His father, who had been a silk weaver in Paisley, returned to the town about the beginning of the century. The son thus formed the acquaintance of Tannahill, and, as is well known, the beautiful

\* By Robert Brown, F.S.A., Scot. Alexander Gardner, Paisley and London.



melodies to which the finest of the poet's lyrics are sung, were compositions of his friend. The friendship of the men was a union of kindred spirits, for Smith was a man of great poetical feeling and general culture, though it was in music that his genius found its fullest expression. He must always take a high rank among those who laboured to extend their taste for his favourite art in Scotland during the early part of the century; and as leader of a choir, first in the Abbey Church of Paisley and afterwards in St. George's, Edinburgh, as well as by his beautiful anthems and psalm-tunes, he did more, probably, than

any man of his time to improve the musical service of the Scottish churches.

The few points to which I have drawn attention will suffice to show that Provost Brown's book contains a good many items of literary history that are of more than local interest. To me it has been a source of peculiar gratification, not only because my copy is a gift of the author's courtesy and forms a memento of a fatherly friendship extending back into earliest childhood, but because almost every page has recalled reminiscences delightfully amid all their melancholy of "the days that are no more."

## XII.—JOHN KEATS IN AYRSHIRE.

FROM THE "KILMARNOCK STANDARD."

A VOLUME, which has just been issued from the press of Messrs Macmillan—entitled "The Letters of John Keats to his Family and Friends," edited by Mr. Sydney Colvin—will be heartily welcomed by the admirers of the poet. This is the first complete and carefully compiled collection of the letters, and for the first time have we in an accessible form a full copy of the poet's correspondence relating to his tour through the land of Burns. The book is thus a valuable addition to Burnsiana, for the references to the national bard which it contains are of the highest interest and importance.

Comparatively few of our readers, we dare say, are conversant with the particulars of this pilgrimage of John Keats. It was in the summer of 1818 that the poet, then about twenty-three years of age, set out on a walking tour, in company with a young friend, through the Lake District of England, and thence through the shires of Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigtown; the journey, after a brief visit to Ireland, being continued, by way of Port Patrick, Stranraer, and Ballantrae, on to the Ayrshire Burns country. The following verses and letters were written at Dumfries:—

"Dumfries, July 1.

"ON VISITING THE TOMB OF BURNS.

"The town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,  
The clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,

Though beautiful, Cold—strange—as in a dream,  
I dreamed long ago, now new begun.  
The short-lived paly Summer is but won  
From Winter's ague, for one night's gleam;  
Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never beam:  
All is cold Beauty; pain is never done;  
For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,  
The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue  
Sickly imagination and sick pride  
Cast wan upon it! Burns! with honour due  
I oft have honoured thee. Great shadows hide  
Thy face: I sin against thy native skies."

"You will see by this sonnet that I am at Dumfries. We have dined in Scotland. Burns's tomb is in the Churchyard corner, not very much to my taste, though on a scale large enough to show they wanted to honour him. Mrs. Burns lives in this place; most likely we shall see her to-morrow—This Sonnet I have written in a strange mood half asleep. I know not how it is, the Clouds, the Sky, the Houses, all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish. I will endeavor to get rid of my prejudices and tell you fairly about the Scotch.

"Dumfries, July 2nd.

"In Devonshire they say, 'Well, where be ye going?' Here it is, 'How is it wi' yourself?' A man on the Coach said the horses took a Hellish heap o' drivin'; the same fellow pointed out Burns's Tomb with a deal of life—'There de ye see it, among the trees—white, wi' a roond tap?' The first well-dressed Scotchman we had any conversation

with, to our surprise confessed himself a Deist. The careful manner of delivering his opinions, not before he had received several encouraging hints from us, was very amusing. Yesterday was an immense Horse-fair at Dumfries, so that we met numbers of men and women on the road, the woman nearly all barefoot, with the shoes and clean stockings in hand, ready to put on and look smart in the Towns. There are plenty of wretched cottages whose smoke has no outlet but by the door. We have now begun upon Whisky, called here Whuskey,—very smart stuff it is. Mixed like our liquors, with sugar and water, 'tis called toddy; very pretty drink, and much praised by Burns."

Pursuing the course we have indicated, the travellers reach Girvan on the 10th July. The poet writes:—

"Now we are at Girvan, 13 miles north of Balantree. Our Walk has been along a more grand shore to-day than yesterday—Ailsa beside us all the way.—From the heights we could see quite at home Cantire and the large Mountains of Arran, one of the Hebrides. We are in comfortable Quarters. The Rain we feared held up bravely and it has been fine this day.—To-morrow we shall be at Ayr."

It was in the inn at Girvan that Keats wrote his magnificent Sonnet

"TO AILSA ROCK.

"Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid!  
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl's screams!  
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?  
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?  
How long is't since the mighty power did  
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?  
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams?  
Or when grey clouds are thy cold cover-lid?  
Thou answerst not, for thou art dead asleep!  
Thy life is but two dead eternities—  
The last in air, the former in the deep.  
First with the whales, last with the eagle skies—  
Drown'd was't thou till an earthquake made the  
sleep,  
Another cannot wake thy giant size."

"Kirkoswald, July 11.

"'Tis now the 11th of July and we have come 8 miles to Breakfast at Kirkoswald. I hope the next Kirk will be Kirk Alloway. I

have nothing of consequence to say now concerning our journey—so I will speak as far as I can judge on the Irish and Scotch—I know nothing of the higher Classes—yet I have a persuasion that there the Irish are victorious. As to the profanum vulgus I must incline to the Scotch. They never laugh—but they are always comparatively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the Irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point—he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be referred to as a meridian in his notion of things—so that you do not know him—and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the Irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your head. A Scotchman's motive is more easily discovered than an Irishman's. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an Irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire for revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallows fellow. A Scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me they are both sensible of the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over grave and over decent and the Irishman over impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore—I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable.—The Scotchman has made up his Mind with himself in a sort of snail shell wisdom. The Irishman is full of strongheaded instinct. The Scotchman is further in Humanity than the Irishman—there he will stick perhaps when the Irishman will be refined beyond him—for the former thinks he cannot be improved—the latter would grasp it for ever, place but the good plain before him.

"Maybole, July 11.

"Since breakfast we have come only four miles to dinner, not nearly, for we have examined in the way two Ruins, one of them very fine, called Crossraguel Abbey—there is a winding Staircase to the top of a little Watch Tower."

On the same day he writes to another correspondent:—

"Maybole, July 11, 1818.

"MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—I'll not run over the Ground we have passed; that would be nearly as bad as telling a dream—unless perhaps I do it in the manner of the Laputan printing press—that is I put down Mountains, Rivers, Lakes, dells, glens, Rocks and Clouds, with beautiful, enchanting Gothic, picturesque, fine delightful, enchanting, Grand, sublime—a few blisters, etc.—and now you have our journey thus far; where I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns's Cottage very fast. We have made continual inquiries from the time we saw his Tomb at Dumfries—his name of course is known all about—his great reputation among the plodding people is 'that he wrote a good many sensible things.' One of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns—we need not think of his misery—that is all gone, bad luck to it—I shall look upon it hereafter with un-mixed pleasure, as I do upon my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey. I shall fill this sheet for you in the Bardie's country, going no further than this till I get into the town of Ayr which will be a nine-mile walk to Tea.

"Kingswell, July 13.

"We were talking on different and different things, when on turning a corner upon the immediate Country of Ayr—The Sight was as rich as possible. I had no Conception that the native place of Burns was so beautiful—the idea I had was more desolate, his 'rigs of Barley' seemed always to me but a few strips of Green on a cold hill—O prejudice! it was as rich as Devon—I endeavoured to drink in the Prospect that I might spin it out to you as the Silkworm makes silk from Mulberry leaves—I cannot recollect it—Besides all the Beauty, there were the mountains of Arran Isle, black and huge over the Sea. We came upon everything suddenly—there were in our way the 'bonny Doon,' with the Brig that Tam o' Shanter crossed, Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage, and then the Brigs of Ayr. First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon, surrounded by every Phantasy of green in Tree, Meadow, and Hill,—the stream of the Doon, as a Farmer told us, is covered with trees from head to foot—you

know those beautiful heaths so fresh against the weather of a summer's evening—there was one stretching along behind the trees. I wish I knew always the humour my friends would be in at opening a letter of mine, to suit it to them as nearly as possible. I could always find an egg shell for Melancholy, and as for Merriment a Witty humour will turn anything to Account—My head is sometimes in such a whirl in considering the million likings and antipathies of our Moments—that I can get into no settled strain in my Letters. My Wig! Burns and sentimentality coming across you and Frank Flatgate in the office—O scenery that thou shouldst be crushed between two Puns—As for them I venture the rascaliest in the Scotch Region—I hope Brown does not put them punctually in his journal—If he does I must sit on the cutty-stool all next winter. We went to Kirk Alloway—a 'Prophet is no Prophet in his own country'—We went to the Cottage and took some Whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the roof—they are so bad I cannot transcribe them—The Man at the cottage was a great bore with his anecdotes—I hate the rascal—his Life consists in fuz, fuzzy, fuzziest—he drinks glasses five for the Quarter and twelve for the hour—he is a mahogany-faced old Jackass who knew Burns—He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself 'a curious old Bitch'—but he is a flat old dog—I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him. O the flummery of a birthplace! Cant! Cant! Cant! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache—Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest—this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity; the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet. My dear Reynolds—I cannot write about scenery and visitings—Fancy is indeed less than a present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance—you would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos—you would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself—One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for in a whole year in his native country. His Misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one's quill—I tried to forget it—to drink Toddy without any Care—to write a



merry sonnet—it won't do—he talked with Bitches—he drank with Blackguards, he was miserable—We can see horribly clear, in the works of such a Man, his whole life, as if we were God's spies."

Another letter written from Kingswells on the same day is the following :—

"I have been writing to Reynolds—therefore any particulars since Kirkoswald have escaped me—from said Kirk we went to Maybole to dinner—then we set forward to Burness' town Ayr—the approach to it is extremely fine—quite outwent my expectations—richly meadowed, wooded, heathed and rivuleted—with a grand Sea view terminated by the black mountains of the isle of Arran. As soon as I saw them so nearly I said to myself 'How is it they did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic? The bonny Doon is the sweetest river I ever saw—overhung with fine trees as far as we could see—We stood some time on the Brig across it, over which Tam o' Shanter fled—we took a pinch of snuff on the key stone—then we proceeded to the 'auld Kirk Alloway.' As we were looking at it a Farmer pointed the spots where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel' and 'drunken Charlie brake's neck's bane.' Then we proceeded to the Cottage he was born in—there was a board to that effect by the door side—it had the same effect as the same sort of memorial at Stratford-on-Avon. We drank some Toddy to Burns's memory with an old man who knew Burns—damn him and damn his anecdotes—he was a great bore—it was impossible for a Southron to understand above 5 words in a hundred.—There was something good in his description of Burns's melancholy the last time he saw him. I was determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage. I did—but it was so bad I cannot venture it here. Next we walked to Ayr Town, and before we went to Tea saw the new Brig and the auld Brig and Wallace tower. Yesterday we dined with a Traveller. We were talking about Kean. He said he had seen him at Glasgow 'In Othello in the Jew, I mean—er—er—er—the Jew in Shylock.' He got bother'd completely in vague ideas of the Jew in Othello, Shylock in the Jew, Shylock in Othello, Othello in Shylock, the Jew in Othello, etc., etc.—he left himself in a mess

at last. Still satisfied with himself he went to the Window and gave an abortive whistle of some tune or other—it might have been Handel. There is no end to these Mistakes—he'll go and tell people how he has seen 'Malvolio in the Countess,—'Twelfth night in a Midsummer Night's Dream'—'Bottom in Much Ado About Nothing'—'Viola in Barrymore'—'Antony in Cleopatra'—'Falstaff in the Mouse Trap.'"

On the evening of the latest date given above Keats reached Glasgow on his way to the Highlands. He took the direct road from Ayr to Glasgow, as is shown by his letters dated from "Kingswells" (the inn in the moor, four miles beyond Fenwick), so that he must have passed through Kilmarnock, and probably would spend a night in this town. On the night of the 11th July he would sleep in Ayr, and on the 13th we find him at "Kingswells." The same evening he arrived at Glasgow. How pleasing it is to think of this glorious young poet walking along our streets, fresh from his homage at the shrine of Burns, 73 years ago!

From the Island of Mull, on the 22nd July, he writes :—

"One of the pleasantest bouts we have had was our walk to Burns's Cottage, over the Doon, and past Kirk Alloway. I had determined to write a Sonnet in the Cottage. I did—but lawk! it was so wretched I destroyed it—however in a few days afterwards I wrote some lines cousin-german to the circumstance, which I will transcribe, or rather cross-scribe in the front of this."

We append both the Cottage Sonnet and the lines written in the Highlands.

#### SONNET WRITTEN IN BURNS'S COTTAGE.

"This mortal body of a thousand days  
Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,  
Where thou did'st dream alone on budded days,  
Happy and thoughtless of thy day or doom!  
My pulse is warm with thine own barley bree,  
My head is light with pledging a great soul,  
My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,  
Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;  
Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,  
Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find  
The meadow thou hast trampled o'er and o'er—  
Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind—  
Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name—  
O smile among the shades for this is fame!



LINE'S WRITTEN IN THE HIGHLANDS  
AFTER A VISIT TO BURNS'S COUNTRY.

"There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,  
Where patriot Battle has been fought, where glory  
had the gain ;  
There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old  
have been,  
Where Mantles gray have rustled by and swept the  
nettles green ;  
There is a Joy in every spot made known by times of old,  
New to the feet, although each tale a hundred times  
be told ;  
There is a deeper Joy than all, more solemn in the  
heart,  
More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine  
a smart.  
When weary steps forget themselves, upon a pleasant  
turf,  
Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron scurf,  
Toward the Castle, or the Cot, where long ago was  
born,  
One who was great through mortal days, and died of  
fame unshorn.  
Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are  
far away ;  
Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the sun may  
hear his Lay ;  
Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows  
clear,  
But their low voices are not heard, though come on  
travels drear ;  
Blood-red the sun may set behind black mountain  
peaks ;  
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in Caves  
and weedy creeks ;  
Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the Air ;  
Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high  
cedar'd lair ;  
But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,  
As Palmer's, that, with weariness, 'mid desert shrine  
hath found.  
At such a time the Soul's a child, in childhood is the  
brain ;  
Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone it beats in  
vain.—  
Aye, if a Madman could have leave to pass a healthful  
day

To tell his forehead's swoon and faint where first began  
decay,  
He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had  
gone forth  
To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent  
North.  
Scanty the hour and few the steps, beyond the bourn  
of Care,  
Beyond the sweet and bitter world—beyond it un-  
aware !  
Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer  
stay  
Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal  
way :  
O horrible ! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,  
Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every  
place ;  
Filling the Air, as on we move, with Portraiture in-  
tense ;  
More warm than those heroic tints that pain a Painter's  
sense,  
When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of  
old,  
Locks shining black, hair scanty grey, and passions  
manifold.  
No no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length  
Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its  
strength :—  
One hour, half-idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,  
But in the very next he reads his soul's Memorial :—  
He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance  
he may sit down  
Upon rough marble diadem—that hill's eternal Crown.  
Yet be his Anchor e'er so fast, room is there for prayer  
That man may never lose his Mind on Mountains black  
and bare ;  
That he may never stray league after league some  
Great birthplace to find  
And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight  
unblind."

The lovers of Burns as well as the lovers of  
Keats, owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Colvin  
for producing in a form so convenient a col-  
lection of letters of such deep and abiding  
interest.

### XIII.—THE AYR BURNS STATUE.

#### UNVEILING CEREMONY.

FROM THE "GLASGOW WEEKLY HERALD," JULY 11TH, 1891.

ON July 7th, 1891, the reproach of indiffer-  
ence which had so frequently been cast upon  
the inhabitants of the birthplace of Burns  
was cleared away through the unveiling of a  
statue of the poet by Sir Archibald C. Campbell  
of Blythswood, Grand Master Mason of Scot-

land. In Glasgow, Dundee, Dumfries, Kil-  
marnock, and other places monuments had  
been erected in recognition of his genius, but  
in the town which is so much indebted to his  
associations with it nothing whatever was  
done, except in recent years, when the natal

day of the poet has been observed with the usual celebrations. About four years ago it occurred to some of the members of the Ayr Burns Club that it was time to wipe away the stigma, and the project being mooted in public it was not long till the matter took a definite shape. Subscriptions for erecting a statue were received from all quarters, in fact from nearly every part of the globe where Scotchmen were to be found. The amount which had been received two years ago warranted the committee in asking twelve Scottish sculptors to submit models. These models were exhibited in the Council Room, and on the recommendation of Mr. Hamo Thorneycroft, R.A., it was decided to select the model submitted by Mr. G. A. Lawson, F.R.S.A., London. The public unanimously endorsed the decision, and the sculptor was instructed to proceed with the work.

It was a difficult matter for the committee to fix on a suitable central site. Various places were suggested, and it was not till after careful consideration that the vacant ground opposite the old Cattle Market was fixed upon. Fortunately, the committee had little trouble in getting the Town Council to agree, seeing that the horse fairs which used to be held there had been removed to the new Cattle Market. The situation is central, being immediately opposite the main entrance to the railway passenger station, so that visitors to the town will have no trouble in finding it. The ground is to be laid off in flower plots, and is to be enclosed with an artistic iron railing, which Sir William Arrol has generously offered to supply.

In connection with the pedestal, the committee were also very fortunate. Sir John M'Dowall, a native of Ayr, but who has been for a long time engaged in business in Greece, while paying a visit to his old friends, generously offered to send from Greece a block of marble for the pedestal; but on learning that the sculptor was afraid that stone would suffer from the climate, he kindly consented to give the equivalent in money. The pedestal, which was designed by Messrs Morris & Hunter, architects, London and Ayr, is a selected rock from Kemnay Quarries, Aberdeenshire. It stands 12ft. 3in. in height, the spread of the base being 12ft. The stone

forming the die weighs about five tons, the amount of granite used in the erection of the pedestal being 25 tons. The lower part of the die has a space on each side for a bronze *bas relief*, and already one for the front panel has been promised. Between the die and the main cornice there is a sculptured granite frieze, worked from models prepared by Mr. David M'Gill, gold medalist, South Kensington, who is a native of Kilmarnock. The architects have taken a new line in regard to the arrangement of the frieze, a ribbon scroll upon it showing the names and dates of the Poet's various residences, beginning at Alloway, 1759, then Mount Oliphant, Lochlea, Kirkoswald, Irvine, Mossiel, Edinburgh, Ellisland, and finally Dumfries.

The statue, which is placed with the face looking towards the poet's birthplace and the "banks and braes o' bonnie Doon," is undoubtedly a credit to Mr. Lawson, and is sure to add to his reputation. To a close observer it will at once be seen that the sculptor's principal object has been to get as near as possible to the real man. He has taken the Poet as a son of the soil, but still a man of independence, the crossed arms and the slightly clenched right hand clearly bearing out that characteristic. The costume is of the simplest kind, and there is no tendency to overdressing.

The following gentlemen formed the Statue Committee:—Mr. William Burns, chairman; Mr. C. Smith, hon. treasurer; Mr. R. Goudie, president, Ayr Burns Club; Provost Ferguson, vice-president, Ayr Burns Club; Mr. J. A. MacCallum, hon. treasurer, Ayr Burns Club; Mr. George Bain, hon. secretary, Ayr Burns club; Mr. J. C. Highet, vice-chairman; Mr. Thomas Duncan, hon. secretary; Messrs James M'Lachlan, W. Murray, J. Hyslop, R. Scoular, Dr. Watt, J. Gray, and J. K. Hunter.

The day was not set apart as a holiday in Ayr, but from an early hour in the forenoon the streets presented a lively appearance, owing to the large number of visitors from all parts of the surrounding country who were landed from trains. The principal streets were gay with flags, and the top of the Wallace Monument, and many of the ships in the harbour were similarly decorated. The earlier part of the day was dull, and rain threatened

to mar the pleasure of the proceedings, but after mid-day the appearance of the sky became more promising, and there were frequent gleams of sunshine. The Provincial Grand Lodge was opened in the Town Hall, and the Grand Master, with the deputation from the Grand Lodge, were received with accustomed ceremony. The procession, under the direction of Brother Lieut.-Col. Morton, left the Low Green soon after two o'clock, and marched through the leading streets, being joined at the Town Hall by the Magistrates of Ayr, Kilmarnock, and other burghs, the Statue Committee, and the council of the Ayr Burns Club, and by the Grand Master. As the deputation arrived at the enclosure, positions were taken up, and Sir Archibald Campbell with due Masonic ceremony, unveiled the statue.

After the company, led by the band of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers from Maryhill, had sung the 100th Psalm, a dedicatory prayer was offered up by Dr. Dykes, Ayr, in the unavoidable absence of the Grand Chaplain. The plumb, level, and square were then applied to the pedestal, and Sir Archd. Campbell, Grand Master, with three knocks on the stone, declared the pedestal correctly erected according to the rules of Masonry. Sir Archibald Campbell then unveiled the statue, amid loud and continued cheering from the large assemblage.

Sir ARCHIBALD, in his address, said—Ladies and gentlemen and brethren all, in 1759 there was born not far, I believe, only two miles, from this town and from this place upon which we now stand, in a cottage built by the father of Robert Burns and by his own hands, the illustrious poet whose statue your patriotism has now enabled me to unveil. It is not gifted to many of us—I might say it is only within centuries a star of his magnitude comes upon the scene; but it is a great thing for a nation to have had sons like Robert Burns—because he knits together ourselves in a bond of union which is unable to be broken. And when we remember now that our nation spreads its borders to an extent

which he himself could never have divined, even in his poetic fancy—when we know that we are scattered as it were throughout the earth raising fresh nations yet his fame in everyone of them is spoken of by your hearty sons and daughters, who go forward to make these great nations, and it unites and knits them to old fatherland at home—these are the uses of these great men, and it has often struck me that the education which the greatest of our poets, men like Shakespeare and Robert Burns, had, was so extraordinarily meagre when we consider the magnificence of the works that they performed, it always strikes me in reading their works that the marvel is where they got all the knowledge. It shows in what power genius can lay hold of the smallest particle and work it up into such a form that it remains a lesson to us in our days. I trust that this great assemblage will not forget the man whose statue I have now unveiled. I trust it may be an incentive to many a young man showing as it does, as I have shown, that it requires perseverance and determination to make oneself of use in this world. I thank you for your kind attention on this occasion.

The band then played "There was a lad was born in Kyle," in the singing of which the company joined.

Mr. W. BURNS, Chairman of the Statue Committee, having formally handed over the statue to the Magistrates and Council of Ayr, Provost FERGUSON accepted it in the name of that body.

Mr. WALLACE BRUCE, United States Consul at Edinburgh, then recited a poem, "The Auld Brig's Welcome," which he had composed for the occasion.

Votes of thanks proposed by Mr. Robert Goudie, President of the Ayr Burns Club, terminated the proceedings, after which the procession was re-formed, and after marching through the town dispersed.

A banquet followed at the Town Hall, Mr. Goudie proposing "The Immortal Memory of Burns."



## XIV.—THE NATIONAL CELEBRATION.

THERE is no more thoroughly national celebration in Scotland, or observed by Scotsmen abroad, than that which thus yearly recalls the matchless genius of Coila's singer. Many have wondered that one who has been called the Ayrshire Bard, whose song was bounded by the horizon of his own walk, who wrote only of his own experiences, and who was prouder of his birthplace on the banks of Doon than of any other spot in Scotland, should be the poet of the Scottish heart, no matter where the heart first beat. Burns never tried to be cosmopolitan, or even presumed to be national. He yearned for poetic recognition it is true, but he estimated his position as lower than that of his poetic predecessors—Ramsay and Fergusson. He craved that he—

—“for puir auld Scotland's sake  
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,  
Or sing a sang at least”—

but every Scotsman worthy of the name wants to do something for his native land, no matter how little or how commonplace that something may be. In his later years, after Burns had won a recognized place among the poets of his country, a suggestion was made that he should visit the battlefields of Scotland and sing about them. Such a suggestion was certainly an agreeable one, and he did in reality stand on many of the fields which are famous in Scotland's history for victory or defeat, but he could not write poetry to order, and most of them remained unsung by him. His genius could not be fettered by rule or even by rhyme, it could not be aroused by artificial means, it could not imitate a note, or praise because others praised. His muse was simple, natural and truthful. It was from the heart, and it was only when the heart was stirred that it sang a real song, and the deeper the heart was touched the purer and mellower and nobler became its notes. It is this truthfulness, this earnestness, this heart inspiration that has found a response in the bosom of every Scotsman. Coming from the heart it goes to the heart and rouses an echo which no other national singer has ever awakened, and this has made Burns become, above all others, his

country's poet, the “high chief of Scottish song.”

In the variety of his themes, limited as they mainly were to scenes and persons who came within his own observation, he is comprehensive enough to justify his right to be regarded as the poet not merely of Ayrshire but of Scotland. True, Auld Coila looms up most frequently in his verse because there he had his home before the dark days of Ellisland and Dumfries came upon him; and at Mossgiel, with all its troubles and perplexities, with its bad crops, social extravagancies, theological bickerings, Masonic meetings and love passages, he really spent the happiest days of his short and chequered career. At Mossgiel his muse soared to some of its loftiest heights in such productions as “Man was Made to Mourn,” “The Cotter's Saturday Night,” the “Epistle to Davie,” and that most wonderful picture of low life, “The Jolly Beggars.” At Mossgiel, too, were produced such controversial poems as “Holy Willie's Prayer,” “The Holy Fair,” and “The Ordination,” poems which, however, we may regret the bitterness, the levity, the merciless sarcasm and the contempt for religious ordinances which characterize them, must be credited with having had something to do with lifting the Scottish Church from what the late Principal Tulloch called its “lack of open vision,” and its failure to witness “the living love of a Divine Saviour” during the last century. At Mossgiel, also, Burns was the hero in that love episode which has given a poor Scotch servant-girl—Highland Mary—equal fame, as Alexander Smith has said, “with Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura,” and made her one of the queens in the realm of song.

But with all these outpourings of and about his native country he sang with equal readiness and grace of other sections. The Edinburgh dream did not produce as much as might be expected, but the terrible reality of Dumfries found relief in song, and as the end came nearer it seems to us as if the song became purer and sweeter the closer the hapless poet approached the dark portal which separates time from eternity. The “clear-winding



Devon" received an addition to its beauty when he spoke of it in his verse. Bannockburn was commemorated in one of the war-songs of the world when he sung of in "Scots Wha Hae," "The Birks of Aberfeldy" have invested the Falls of Moness with a charm which is wanting even at Niagara. If a tourist visits Kenmore the lines the poet wrote on its scenic beauties are oftenest heard when the noble scenery of that lovely village is pointed out, as they add a grace which other words could not give. Away further north, where

"Among the heathy hills and rugged woods  
The roaring Foyers pours his mossy floods,"

we find the same fact presented to us, that wherever Burns sang of his native land he sang with all the enthusiasm of a Scot, and by his genius showed his countrymen new beauties and hidden graces in the scenes which lay around them.

Burns was essentially a southern poet, and so his muse makes less direct mention of southern men and matters than it does of the north, which was in his time an unknown country to most Scotsmen. But to the minstrelsy of that southern section of his native land he made many additions. In the song or poem (for it may be described as either) entitled, "Sic a Wife as Willie had," he gives one of those conundrums which are so frequently found in our national song. The poem starts off with—

"Willie Wastle dwelt on Tweed,  
The spot they ca'd it Linkumoddie,"—

but nobody is certain where the spot is or was, although its site has been placed by local investigators in half-a-dozen places. In many of his poems we discover the very spirit which characterises the bulk of the fugitive Border poetry of Scotland, and has made it be regarded as no unworthy part of the nation's literary treasures. Such productions as "Kenmure's On and Awa," "Wanderin' Willie," "Gala Water," or "Auld Rob Morris," are as perfect specimens of pure Border song-writing as can be cited.

Someone has well said that the true country of a Scotsman is his own home, no matter where that home is placed, and if ever a Scotch writer had a right to be called the poet of the Scottish fireside surely that writer

is Robert Burns. His own home life was by no means a perfect one—of that he was himself painfully aware—but whatever his own shortcomings may have been he summed up the philosophy of domestic life truly, truthfully, and completely when he said—

"To make a happy fireside clime  
To weans and wife,  
That's the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life."

Burns even goes further than this, for he shows that this domestic happiness, and indeed happiness of every sort, must have its beginning, whether among gentle and simple, among rich and poor, in the heart.

"It's no in titles nor in rank;  
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,  
To purchase peace or rest;  
It's no in making muckle, mair:  
It's no in books, it's no in lear,  
To make us truly blest.  
If happiness has not her seat  
And centre in the breast,  
We may be wise, or rich, or great,  
But never can be blest.  
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,  
Could make us happy lang,  
The heart's aye, the part aye,  
That makes us richt or wrang."

It would be hard to find in secular literature an equal amount of common sense, of practical, useful and irrefutable philosophy, than is contained in these few lines. Surely a man who could thus teach his countrymen, and through them the world, is worthy of homage, of reverence, of love.

"A true poet," says Thomas Carlyle, "a man in whose heart resides some effluence of wisdom, some tone of the eternal melodies, is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation. We see in him freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson for us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us. Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns." For a long time it was the custom among many to mingle the praises which greeted the name of our poet with sage reflections on his own waywardness and his own errors, but as the years pass on time is removing these stains, and we are gradually coming to the point where we can see nothing, think of nothing, reason of nothing in con-

nection with his life journey but that he was, as Carlyle had pointed out, the development of whatever is noblest in ourselves." If he sinned he suffered. To us he left his message, and the sum total of that message is, the dignity of manly independence, the brotherhood of man, and love for country and for home. So when we celebrate the day which gave the poet to the world let us think of the seer, of the prophet, and remember with the purest enthusiasm the man whose words

did more to keep alive the fame of patriotism in Scotland than those of any other writer or teacher since the brave old days of John Knox.

"Forever cherished be his name  
To whom the priceless gift was given,  
High inspiration's holiest flame—  
The light that comes from heaven.  
Praise to the bard, the chief of song,  
And may, as monumental urns,  
All hearts bear on them, deep and strong  
The name of Robert Burns."

### XV.—THE POET BURNS.

*Lines on His Birthday Anniversary at Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh, accompanying the Presentation of a Facsimile of the Declaration of Independence.*

*By WALLACE BRUCE.*

ONCE more within these hallowed walls  
We celebrate our Laureate dear,  
Whose genius all the world enthalls,  
Whose love awakens festal cheer.

For here the peasant ploughman stood,  
With daisies from the banks of Ay,  
To make this spot a Holyrood—  
An altar for each brother's prayer.

But what shall one from o'er the sea,  
With honour bring as offering meet;  
What voice or word from them to thee,  
Which every heart will gladly greet;  
What theme shall young Columbia bear  
To swell the chorus of your song?  
Well, "Here's a hand my trusty friend,"  
With words that to the tune belong.

Words born of Magna Charta brave,  
Along the banks of Runnymede;  
At Bannockburn, when freemen gave  
A bonnie cast to freedom's seed;

Conceived at far-off Marathon,  
At Salamis, Thermopylæ;  
Crowned in the heart of Washington,  
The noblest product of the free.

Words that inspired the grandest strain  
Which ever thrilled the onward van,  
Soul stirring notes in symbols plain,  
Life's lofty creed—"A man's a man;"  
Ay, Robbie Burns, that song of thine  
Narrows the seas and girds the world,  
And makes these walls a sacred shrine,  
Where faith and hope shall be unfurled.

So take the page your children wrote,  
A common pride is yours and theirs,  
Parents their children fondly quote,  
And well-bred bairns their ain forbears;  
Love's cable tow for evermore  
Binds gallant sire and sturdy son,  
With hearty grasp from shore to shore,  
For Robert Burns and Washington.

### XVI.—ROBERT BURNS.

*By MRS. A. A. WELLINGTON.*

THERE are some lives over which we feel like pausing to repeat Whittier's pathetic lines:

"For of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these, 'It might have been,'"  
and such a life was that of Robert Burns.  
Rarely endowed—as few poets before or

since have been—with the gift of spontaneous song, which fairly gurgled from his soul; with the airy freedom of the skylark's lay, qualified by every attribute of his high-strung nature for his God-given mission, yet yielding so weakly, and at times so utterly, to the head-

strong passions that ultimately caused his ruin and brought him to an untimely grave. The tragedy of Burns's life is a familiar story. But few pause to consider how truly great he must have been to so attract the world's notice that, it is estimated, each decade since he died has produced at least two biographies of him.

It has been said—and Shairp begins his biography of the great poet by repeating the statement—that great men, great events, great epochs grow as we recede from them; and the rate at which they grow in the estimation of men is in some sort a measure of their greatness: "Tried, then," says Shairp, "by this standard, Burns must be great indeed."

It was on January 25th, 1759, in a modest clay-built cottage in the immediate vicinity of the Kirk of Alloway, which Tam o' Shanter has made famous, and near the murmuring Doon, destined to enter into one of the poet's sweetest songs, that Robert Burns was born. A bleak winter storm howled its welcome to the peasant child, blowing down a part of the frail dwelling in which the young mother lay with her first born. Many years later the poet said: "No wonder that one ushered into the world amid such a tempest should be the victim of stormy passions." And, indeed, there was something in his birthday typical of his after life. In "The Cottar's Saturday Night" the great poet has given an immortal pen-picture of his father, who, according to all biographers, was a peasant saint of the old Scottish type. The mother, a bright intelligent woman, much younger than her husband, was the light and joy of her home, and sang at her work the old songs and ballads with which her mind was stored. Thus, though poverty stood like a wolf at the door, there was cheerfulness and affection within the family circle—widened as the years went on by the birth of seven children. When five years old Robert was sent to a school at Alloway Mill, and a little later the father, who held education to be one of the most sacred duties, combined with four neighbours to hire a teacher for their children. According to Shairp, the readings of the household were wide, varied, and unceasing, and it is said some one entering the house at mealtime found the whole family seated, each with a

spoon in one hand and a book in the other. Perhaps there are few countries in the world which could have produced among the poor peasantry just such a character and home as that of William Burness, or Burns, and Scotland may well be proud not only of her famous poet, but of the noble, God-fearing men who tilled her soil.

From his seventh until his eighteenth year, Burns tells us, he worked like a galley slave, and with him the entire family led a life of incessant toil and self-denial, that they might save the roof that sheltered them from the cruel grasp of their exacting landlord. Nevertheless, denser and darker the cloud of poverty settled down around them. The father, worn out by early hardship, was unfit for labour, and upon Robert and Gilbert developed the labour of the farm. In the midst of this hardship—in his sixteenth year—the young poet found time for his first venture both in love and poetry, and the poem, "Handsome Nell," was the result of this boyish passion. From this time—something as with the great German poet Goethe—love and poetry mingle confusingly together in his life. Love-making, his brother tells us, was his chief amusement—or rather his most serious business—for early in his career he found himself betrayed into grave difficulties by his headstrong passions.

In the meantime the family had given up the farm at Oliphant as a bad bargain, and had removed to Lochlea where, for a time, fortune appeared to smile upon them. During these years young Burns seems to have formed his first, and perhaps his last, pure attachment, but, for some reason, his love was not returned. Had it been—had a wife and children claimed his love and care at this turning point—it is safe to say his biographer would have had a different story to tell. As it was, the hot headed, heavy-hearted young poet left his home at this juncture and went to Irvine, a small seaport town, frequented by smugglers and rough adventurers, and this migration, when his heart was embittered by disappointment, proved disastrous in the extreme. Never again in the conduct of his life did Robert Burns escape from the thralldom of his baser nature. Up to this unfortunate time the religious belief, so faith-



fully inculcated by his pious parents, had proved an anchor, and lawless love had been a thing regarded with horror; but his brief sojourn at Irvine undermined every principle of his life so completely that he seems to have drifted out helplessly upon the passion-swept sea of life. In the meantime misfortunes thickened around his family; a flaw in the lease threatened to turn them out into the world homeless and penniless, and Robert returned from Irvine to find his father on his death-bed. Long struggles with scanty means, barren soil, and heartless landlords had proved too much for even the brave, hard-toiling Scotch peasant, and he laid him down for a long rest, leaving the devoted wife and mother to bear her triple burden of sorrow, poverty, and shame alone. Well was it for the good old man that he was spared the crowning misfortune of seeing his gifted son compelled—according to the then universal custom in rural parishes in Scotland—to do penance in church, before the congregation, for the birth of an illegitimate child. The publicity given to his downfall proved anything but beneficial to the young delinquent, and he straightway vented his bitterness of soul in unseemly verses, such as “The Poet’s Welcome to an Illegitimate Child,” “Daddie Auld,” and kindred rhymes. That this seeming glorying in his shame only veiled his real feelings of bitter repentance cannot be doubted, however, by those who have studied his character. “The heart,” says Shairp, “that could respond so feelingly to the sufferings of lower creatures, the unhoused mouse, the shivering cattle, the wounded hare, could not, without sorrowful shame, have brought desolation and ruin into the humblest life.” This unfortunate controversy with the minister and kirk session not only engendered bitterness, but rebellion, in the poet’s bosom, and so encouraged the free-thinking, born of his stay at Irvine, that we find him at once launched into the troubled sea of religious controversy that was raging all around him, and hurling his powerful satire at the pet theories of his opponents. Under this high pressure of feeling he wrote his most satirical poems, such as “The Ordination,” “The Holy Fair,” and “Holy Willie’s Prayer,” in which he so utterly re-

belled against the old Calvinists. In the meantime he had tried his hand at farming, with his brother at Mossiel, “and those years,” says Shairp, “witnessed three things: the wreck of his hopes as a farmer, the revelation of his genius, and the frailty of his character as a man.” Hitherto he had complained that his life was without an aim, now he determined to take his place among the bards of Scotland; and the next two years, from 1784 to 1786, witnessed the production of much of his best work, “Halloween,” “To a Mouse,” “The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” “The Auld Farmer’s Address to his Auld Mare,” “The Vision,” “The Mountain Daisy,” and many others, being of this period.

His favourite time for composition was at the plough, and it was while the author was holding this rough instrument of toil that the exquisite poems, “The Mountain Daisy” and “Field Mouse,” were composed. In July, 1786, the little volume containing these immortal poems appeared, causing a perfect transport of delight, not only to the rich and learned, but to the humble peasantry.

And now, what a brilliant destiny opened before the peasant farmer; how his feet, that had so often traversed their native hills in shoeless nakedness, might have trod the upper air; what a crown of laurel awaited the head so often exposed to the winter blast, with no covering save its thatch of ebony hair, if he had only lived up to his high calling. But, alas! even when the little volume containing these immortal poems was in the hands of the publisher the wretched author was in hiding from the just wrath of Jean Armour’s father, and bewailing the loss of his “Highland Mary.” The only course that seemed open to him was to flee from the scene of his last disgrace, and he had engaged a steerage passage in a vessel, bound for the West Indies, when the wonderful success of his first venture set his feet toward the Scottish capital. “His journey,” his biographer tells us, “from Mossiel to Edinburgh was a sort of triumphal progress.” For him it was reserved to interpret the inmost soul of the Scottish peasant in all its moods, and everywhere the people crowded to greet him and crown him as their poet.

The following March a second edition of



his poems was published, for which there was no less than 1,500 subscribers. About this time he renewed his intimacy with his beloved Jean Armour, which again exposed her to the reproach of her family, and finally resulted in their marriage. With the marriage of his peasant wife, Burns bid farewell to Edinburgh and many brilliant hopes. Some of his admirers have questioned if this sacrifice was really required of him, but Lockhart wisely says: "We cannot but be glad that he chose to act the part of an honest man in thus doing what he could to repair the suffering and shame he had brought upon the mother of his children." From this time, however, the great poet's course tended downward, and the visits of the muse were few and far between. Nevertheless, the wonderful genius was there, and flashed out at intervals with all its wonted brilliancy, sometimes in songs of revelry, as "Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut," or "The Whistle;" then, again, breathing a sigh of despondent regret, as in the immortal lyric, "To Mary in Heaven," written on the third anniversary of her death. Three years later, at the same season, he again breathed forth his lament for his lost love in that most exquisite poem "Highland Mary."

Surely, a man of many moods was the Scottish poet! One day tossing from his pen a song of drunken revelry, the next, a song whose pathos has touched all hearts. In 1789 "John Anderson, my jo, John," first appeared, and the following year a burst of inspiration resulted in the matchless "Tale of Tam o' Shanter," which the great poet regarded as his masterpiece. After this we have only a few poems worthy of notice, among them being the popular song, "The Banks o' Doon," into which he breathed his homesick longings.

And now the French Revolution came on apace, and the words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, echoed and re-echoed through the inmost heart of Burns, finding expression at last in "Bruce's Address," which no doubt owes its inspiration as much to his sympathy

with the French Republican as to his Scottish patriotism. A few years later "Honest Poverty," with its ringing refrain, "A man's a man for a' that," which so ably embodies the thought underlying the American Declaration of Independence, was given to the world.

Poor Burns!—so rarely gifted—this was among the last of his songs. Sickness and suffering were even then dogging his footsteps, and on July 21st, 1796, the news sounded through all Scotland that Robert Burns was dead. A few days later a great multitude of men, numbering, according to Lockhart, twelve thousand, walked silently down the streets of Dumfries with the remains of him who had sung their simple loves, and joys, and domestic life, with a truth and tenderness never before, and perhaps never since, equalled. Nearly a century has elapsed since the peasant poet was laid in his last resting place, yet to-day the interest in his tomb is world-wide, and up to the present time great men are writing of his life and lamenting his untimely death.

To Scotland, Burns was a benediction. When he appeared, her ancient spirit was all but quenched, and her literary men were above all things ashamed of the Scottish vernacular. Upon this scene he appeared, holding aloft the traditions of Wallace, singing his songs in the native dialect of the people, thus awakening long-forgotten emotions and re-kindling patriotic pride. No wonder the peasantry of Scotland have loved Burns as perhaps no other poet has been loved. He not only sympathized with the wants, the trials, the joys, and sorrows of their obscure lot, but he interpreted these to themselves, and interpreted them to others." Wherever the English language is heard, "The Banks o' Doon," "To Mary in Heaven," "Afton Water," "Highland Mary," and others of his exquisite poems are household words. And, it is safe to say, generations yet unborn will linger lovingly over the "Cottar's Saturday Night," and "The Mountain Daisy."

## XVII.—A FRENCH ESTIMATE OF BURNS AND THE SCOTTISH RENAISSANCE.

FROM THE "GLASGOW HERALD," JUNE 6th, 1892.

IN these days of Burns-editing and society-making it is an altogether pleasant thing to revert to a translation of Burns's works by a foreigner who has translated the poet as he is, and not in accordance with some nebulous notion of what he should be. Such a book is the "*Poésies Complètes* de Robert Burns, traduites de l'Écossais," by Leon de Wailly (Paris, 1843)—the first French translation with any claims to completeness published. The poet little thought that less than half a century after his death "haughty Gaul" would do him homage, and that a Frenchman would write a just and discriminating estimate of his genius and his poetry. Yet this is what M. de Wailly did, and an admirable biographical notice of Burns prefixed to the translation, which gives evidence of a comprehensive knowledge of Scottish poetry surprising in a foreigner, clearly shows that he was in every way fitted for the work. The following is a free translation of M. de Wailly's "Notice sur Burns," the facts of Burns's birth, parentage, etc., being omitted:—"Happy are the unlettered poets; to them the kingdom of heaven is opened. They do not see nature through the spectacles of books, as said, by experience, the spiritual Dryden; they do not consult the arts of poetry; they hear nothing of theories, and are not attached to any literary party. They walk alone in their holy innocence; their feet are not embarrassed by the blankets of the schools; they are not bewildered in the pursuit of glimmering deceptions in the sloughs of imitation; they neither analyse nor describe; they feel, they love, they sing. Science stifles instinct; happy are the unlettered poets; they are able to say with the Spanish proverb:—"I am what I am." The divine qualities of Burns would have been lost had he been more lettered. Look at his compatriot, the didactic Thomson. Nature had not been miserly to Thomson, but he was brought up in Edinburgh, he lived in London, and God and the "Seasons" know that he lost his native stamp in the polish of the cities. If Burns

had known Latin and Greek he would perhaps have acceded to the affectionate remonstrances of his good friend, Dr. Moore, who so earnestly recommended the study of antiquity, and who reproached him with squandering his genius instead of undertaking some poem of length, where he would be able to sow with abundance all the flowers of mythology. The fear of limiting the number of his readers might perhaps have persuaded him to exchange his native idiom for the more common English tongue. But happily he was ignorant, and the erroneous counsels of his friends were lost on him. He would remain faithful to the Scottish tongue; he would not blow the English trumpet in honour of Greek or Roman heroes. He did not know them, and he did not wish to know them. What did he, a Scottish peasant, care for antiquity? But old Scotland, the mother of ale and whisky, with her mythology still living, with all her glorious memories; nature which he has under his eyes, and the feelings that are in his heart; the domestic virtues of the paternal cottage, the sufferings of the animals which are the eternal victims of man, the numerous vexations, and the perhaps more numerous amours—these he would sing. A labourer bending over the soil, or riding along the road, he forgot in his song all the troubles and realities of life. What plant is more frail or delicate than genius, and what a combination of circumstances is necessary for its growth? It was not enough this time to have a passionate heart and an ardent imagination. It was necessary that adversity should flourish and hatch the seed, that ignorance should screen the flower of it. And can we help being astonished that this fruit divine should be so rare, and that, like the marvellous tree in Eastern stories, genius should only flourish once in a hundred years!"

"At the time when Burns was born Scotland was a country peculiarly suitable for this precious culture. Poetry needs a temperate

climate—one between the fierce sun of civilisation and the icy darkness of barbarism. In the first we express what we do not feel ; in the last we do not know how to express what we feel. Thanks to a law passed by the Parliament of Scotland in 1646, and which, though revoked by Charles II., was in force up to 1696, Scotland was precisely in this *mezzo termine*. This law, which ordained the establishment of a school in every parish of the kingdom, produced results at once rapid and satisfactory. The Presbyterian Church, which had used its power over its devotees almost to fanaticism to give the instruction a religious tendency, became owing to its success the natural protector of the school. She paid the schoolmaster, who was very often a young man studying for the ministry, and who thus spent the leisure of a probation, which is very long in that country. All these pious souls regarded it their duty to send their children to the instruction recommended by the parish minister, and since that time not only the most of the farmers, but even the simplest peasants, have suffered the greatest privations in order to give their sons the precarious advantages of a liberal education. If anyone should be inclined to doubt the immense influence of education upon the public morals he has only to compare the statistics of the thirty years from 1767 to 1797, which state that the number of executions in Scotland never exceeded six in the year, with the table made a hundred years before by Fletcher of Saltoun, in which he states that there were then in Scotland not less than a hundred thousand vagabonds, who, disregarding not only the laws of the country, but those of God, lived in promiscuous intercourse, brother and sister, father and daughter, son and mother, and who were frequently punished for robbery and murder. The Scottish Church, finding itself, as we have seen, interested in the spread of education, exercised also a favourable influence upon music, and especially vocal music. Upon the establishment of the Reformed Church in Scotland instrumental music was banished from the churches as being a profane amusement. Instead of being led by an instrument, the voices of the congregation were conducted by what is

called a precentor (*grand chantre*), and it was the custom for everyone present to assist in the singing of the psalm. Church music, therefore, became part of the education of the peasantry. It was usual during the long winter evenings for them to receive their singing lessons from the parish schoolmaster, who was often himself precentor, or from some strolling professor whose beauty of voice caused his services to be in demand. Frequently the singing was followed by dancing. For a ball-room, some house whose flooring was the earth ; the lights were candles fixed on a stick driven into the wall ; and the master of ceremonies one of themselves. But the zeal of the dancers made up for the lack of ceremony, and with joyous spirit they went through a succession of reels, strathspeys, and hornpipes, and all the dances of the country. The taste for dancing is very pronounced among Scotsmen of all ranks, but especially among the peasantry. After the labour of the day lads and girls would walk several miles in the cold and terrible nights of winter in order to attend these schools ; and the moment the violin strikes up a national air fatigue is forgotten, all straighten themselves up from the bending toil, every eye sparkles with pleasure, and it is this which proves, not the more grace, but their greater agility, and their *verve* and correctness of ear. Education thus diffused promoted the growth of poetry in the country ; and without this law born of a revolution, and which required another revolution to strengthen it, it is possible that the poetic crown of Scotland would not have been enriched by three such beautiful flowers of the field as Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. Allan Ramsay, who has been called the Theocritus of Scotland, was the son of a workman in the lead mines at Hopetoun, Leadhills. He was born on that high range of hills which separate Clydesdale and Annandale, in a hamlet on the banks of the Glengonar, a small stream which falls into the Clyde. The ruins of this village are still pointed out to tourists. At the beginning of last century he went to Edinburgh, where he apprenticed himself to a barber, being then fourteen or fifteen years old. Being imbued with a



taste for poetry, and having composed some verses in the Scottish dialect, he changed his profession for that of a bookseller, and became acquainted with the literary and fashionable world. In 1721 he published a volume of poems which was favourably received, and afterwards a collection of national melodies under the title of "Evergreen," and its success may be estimated by the number of imitations it produced. It became fashionable in Edinburgh for lovers to compose verses to the favourite airs of their mistresses, like languishing shepherds. In the year 1731, Robert Crawford of Auchinames wrote "Tweedside," which excited general enthusiasm. In 1743, Sir Gilbert Eliot, the first Scottish lawyer who knew how to speak and write elegant English, having had the displeasure of seeing Miss Forbes, his sweetheart, wedded to another, breathed his plaint in the delightful romance, 'My sheep I neglected, I lost my sheephook;' and twelve years later the sister of the same Sir Gilbert wrote the words expressive of the national dolor, adapted to the air of 'The Flowers o' the Forest,' a beautiful little composition whose sprightliness detracts nothing from its simplicity. Add to these the ballad of 'Hardiknute,' by Lady Wardlaw; 'the Birks of Invermay,' by Mallet; the youthful work of Thomson beginning 'For ever, fortune, wilt thou prove;' the pathetic ballad, 'The Braes of Yarrow,' by Hamilton of Bangor, and you have the principal compositions which signalise the renaissance of the rustic poetry of Scotland, of which Allan Ramsay has perhaps the best title to be called the inaugurator. I say renaissance, because its origin was more ancient and more illustrious. It had a king for its father. *Christis-Kirk of the Grene*, the first example of this species, is attributed to James I., the unfortunate son of Robert III., who, by the perfidy of his uncle, the Duke of Albany, fell at the age of 11 years into the power of Henry VI., with whom he remained a prisoner for 20 years. This young prince, whom the King of England, though his jailer, saw fit to educate with the best possible care, became an accomplished gentleman. In dancing, riding, archery, and the tournament; grammar, philosophy, rhe-

toric, music, and poetry, he showed a remarkable aptitude. He was captive for 15 years at Windsor Castle, where he fell deeply in love with Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset, whom he married in 1424. His love inspired him to write a poem of 97 stanzas, under the title of 'The King's Quair,' in which he sang, with a voice pure, melodious, and often impassioned, the praises of his beautiful mistress—

Ah, sweet, are ye a worldly creature,  
Or heavenly thing in likeness of nature?

Chère belle, êtes-vous humaine créature,  
Ou bien chose du ceil sous forme de nature?

As for this poem of *Christis-Kirk of the Grene*, another Royal author disputes its authorship; and Sir David Dalrymple, contrary to the opinion of Tytler, believes that James V. was its real author. Whoever it was, is it not a glorious thing for the rustic muse of Scotland to see two monarchs disputing for its humble crown of blue-bells and gowans? Allan Ramsay essayed to complete the poem of King James by adding to it two cantos of his own composition, and it is for this reason that *Christis-Kirk of the Grene* is generally printed in the works of Ramsay." After describing this poem, and referring to the other works of Ramsay, M. de Wailly goes on to deal with Fergusson. "Evidently," he says, "Fergusson's chief poem, 'The Farmer's Ingle,' inspired Burns's most serious composition, 'The Cottar's Saturday Night.' Burns, when he began to write, had read Allan Ramsay, but he had not read the poems of Fergusson. When he did read them, however, he felt an affection for that ardent and sensible soul, that young imagination, which inspired him many a time afterwards. Having ascertained that Fergusson's tomb had not obtained the honour of a stone, he wrote to the magistrates of the Canongate in Edinburgh, and, not without pain, drew from their *insouciance* permission to repair at his own cost this forgotten shame. Alas! same country, same genius, same heart, same fortune, who was better able to appreciate Robert Fergusson than Robert Burns! Both their lives were embittered by privations of all kinds, and by the moral sufferings of unrecognised genius. Fergusson, less to be pitied perhaps, died at the age of



20, without wife, without children, having only to weep for himself and suffer his own hunger.

"I dread thee, fate, relentless and severe,  
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!"

"Je te redoute, ô sort implacable et sévère,  
De ma peur de poète, et d'époux, et de père!"

"Rustic eclogues, familiar epistles, amorous tales, national songs, country stories—Robert Burns dealt with all the kinds of poetry familiar to Allan Ramsay. Like him, he is distinguished by the reality of his characters and the truth of his scenery; by the native freedom of his style, and by his humour; but Burns is far ahead of his predecessor in liveliness of spirit and warmth of soul. Burns is of that family of writers whose power reaches the heart: *Pectus est quod facit disertus*. With him there is no literary preoccupation, none of the beauties of the room; he lives in the pure air amid nature. He is not one of those pastoral muses who only visit the country on fine days to recoup themselves after all their luxuriant winter dissipations; courtly muses who only sing of nature in her pleasant garb, whose forests like those of Virgil, are dignified as a consul; who transfer their amours from the city to bring them back to the shams of a gravelled walk and an artificial river. The muse of Burns is entirely rustic; she dwells in a cottage; rises with the sun; harnesses herself with the cattle; soaks the furrows with her sweat; lives on oatmeal; willingly frequenting the village hostel; speaking more of poppies than of lilies; of pools than of lakes; of wild ducks than of swans; and only taking her loves in the village—perhaps it is for this reason that she is so constant. With such a guide we are far away from the boudoirs of the warm greenhouses, as we inspire the noble air, as we are animated, interested, impassioned in speaking to the heart, as we are conscious of the intimate harmony with those we love, and in whom we live." So much for M. de Wailly's estimate of Burns and the Scottish renaissance.

In translating the writings of a poet like Burns, the usual difficulties attending the conveyance of a poet's works into another language are doubly intensified. Our French translator was perfectly well aware of this, and plainly admits at the conclusion of his preface

that in his own language there can be found nothing equivalent to the naïve charm of the Scottish dialect. "But," he says, "if the translation is not satisfactory, I will engage, without the least hypocrisy, to say that it is not the fault of the poet, but is owing to the shortcomings of the translator and of the translation." Hence, although M. de Wailly did his work as well perhaps as it could possibly be done, a Scotchman reading these French verses must be struck by their painful inadequacy to convey to our friends across the Channel the faintest idea of the magic power which Burns exerts on the hearts of his countrymen. For example take the following:—

"Appelle les brebis sur les hauteurs,  
Appelle-les où croit la bruyère,  
Appelle-les où roule le juisseau,  
Ma belle chérie."

All the facts are there, and all the ideas are faithfully reproduced in French from Burns done into English: but it is not "Ca' the yowes to the knowes" that we read, but "Call the sheep to the heights." The translator had apparently some difficulty in deciding whether he should adopt a metrical and rhymed translation or a prose one; but he wisely adopted the latter mode. He, however, gives us two specimens of his efforts in rhyme in "Tam o' Shanter" and "John Barleycorn." The first verse of "John Barleycorn"—(Jean Grain-d'Orge)—as done in each style will at once show the superiority of the prose translation:—

- (1) "Il était une fois trois rois  
A l'orient, puissants tous trois:  
Ils avaient juré par la gorge  
Qu'ils feraient mourir Jean Grain-d'Orge."
- (2) "Il y avait trois rois à l'Est,  
Trois grands et puissants rois,  
Et ils firent le serment solennel  
Que Jean Grain-d'Orge mourrait."

A decidedly happy effort, however, which has a real dash of the spirit of the original in it, is "The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scottish representatives," which opens as follows:—

"Vous lords irlandais, vous chevaliers et squires,  
Qui représentez nos bourgs et comtés,  
Et faites sagement nos affaires  
Au parlement,  
A vous les prières d'un simple poète  
S'adressent humblement."

Still better is the first verse of the "Address to the Deil" (*Requêt au Diable*), which is full of characteristically Scottish words :—

"O toi, quel que soit le titre que te convienne,  
Vieux cornu, Satan, Nick, ou pied fourchu,  
Qui là-bas dans ta caverne sombre et enfumée,  
Enfermé sous les écouilles,  
Fais jaillir autour de toi l'écuelle de soufre  
Pour échauder les pauvres malheureux !"

The reader will observe how "Cloutie," a term derived from *clout*, a hoof, is translated *pied fourchu*, cloven-foot ; and "spairges," an untranslatable word, is given as *fais jaillir*, to gush or burst forth, which is perhaps as near the idea as French can get ; "brimstone cootie," which is calculated to puzzle any translator, is rendered by *écuelle de soufre*, a bowl of brimstone. Naturally, however, the lover of Burns will want to know the fate of the immortal Tam o' Shanter, and it is satisfactory to find that in the prose version full justice has been done to our old friend and "le cordenier Johnny, sun ancien, fidèle, altéré ami." When Tam is in his direst extremity he is thus apostrophised :—

"Ah, Tam ! ah, Tam ! tu vas avoir tou cadeau de foire  
Elles te rôtriront en enfer comme un hareng !"

M. de Wailly being unable to promise Tam his "fairin'," has to put up with "present of the fair," which is not so compact. So also in "John Anderson" he is unable to get over "jo," so we have it :—

"John Anderson, mon bon ami, John."

In a great number of instances the translation has a very funny appearance to a Scot, as when "Whistle ower the lave o't" comes up as "Sifflez sur le reste," and "Landlady count the lawin'" as "Cà donc, hôtesse, additionne le compte." The description of the wooing of the philosophical Duncan Gray is very good, the verse in which the rejected suitor is represented as consoling himself runs :—

"Le temps et la chance ne sont qu'une marée,  
Ah ! ah ! quelle cour !  
L'amour dédaigné est dur à supporter,  
Ah ! ah ! quelle cour !  
Irai-je, comme un sot, dit-il,  
Mourir pour une pécote hautaine ?  
Elle peut aller en France pour moi !  
Ah ! ah ! quelle cour !"

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The lines on the peregrinations of Captain Grose lose none of their droll humour when done into French, and for the satisfaction of *frères écossais*, the opening lines may be quoted :—

"Ecoutez, terre de gâteaux, et frères écossais,  
De Maidenkirck chez Johnny Groat,  
S'il y a un trou a un de vos habits,  
Je vous avertis d'y prendre garde :  
Vous avez au milieu de vous un gaillard qui  
prend des notes,  
Et, ma foi, il l'imprimera !"

"Auld Lang Syne" seems to have given the translator some trouble, although he has managed to make a fairly passable translation of a most difficult composition :—

"LE BON VIEUX TEMPS.

"Est-ce que notre ancienne liaison s'oublierait,  
Et ne nous reviendrait plus à l'esprit ?  
Est-ce que notre ancienne liaison s'oublierait,  
Et aussi les jours du bon vieux temps ?

*Chœur*—Pour le bon vieux temps, mon cher,  
Pour le bon vieux temps  
Nous boirons encore un coup de bonne amitié,  
Pour le bon vieux temps.

"Nous avons tous deux couru sur les coteaux  
Et cueilli les belles marguerites ;  
Mais nous avons plus d'une fois trainé nos pieds  
fatigués,  
Depuis le bon vieux temps.  
*Chœur.*

"Nous avons tous deux patangé dans le ruisseau,  
Dupuis le lever du soleil jusqu'au dîner ;  
Mais les vastes mers ont rugi entre nous,  
Dupuis le bon vieux temps.

"Et voici ma main, mon fidèle ami,  
Et donne-moi la tienne,  
Et nous boirons un coup de tout cœur  
Pour le bon vieux temps.

"Et à coup sûr vous tiendrez votre pinte,  
Et à coup sûr je tiendrai la mienne,  
Et nous boirons un coup de bonne amitié  
Pour le bon vieux temps."

The last verse is very good, the translator having caught the idea completely. It need hardly be pointed out that "les belles marguerite" is literally "the gowans fine," the French name for the gowan or daisy being "marguerite."

Passing from the lively to the pathetic, we find the "wee sleekit, cowerin', timorous beastie" thus addressed :—

"Petite bête lisse, farouches et craintive,  
Oh, quelle panique dans ton sein !

Tu n'as pas besoin de te sauver si vite  
Et d'un pas si précipité !  
Il me repugnerait de courir après toi  
Avec le curoir meurtrier !

No less commendable is the translation of  
"Tam Samson's Elegy," which commences—

"La vieille Kilmarnock a-t-elle vu le diable ?  
Ou le grand MacKinlay s'est-il foulé le talon ?  
Ou Robinson est-il rétabli et en état  
De prêcher et de lire ?  
'Non, pis que toutcela !' s'écrie chaque jeune garçon,  
'Tam Samson est mort !'"

These specimens show that the poetry which is breathed in Burns's lines can hardly be killed even after going through the ordeal of two translations—from Scots into English, and from English into French—which fact is a strong proof, if such were needed, of the sterling quality of the poet's work. This is specially noticeable in the last piece to be cited—"Scots, wha hae," or, as it is entitled in the volume before us, "Bannockburn." It is impossible to destroy the inherent nobility of this heroic war-song even with two translations and a faulty original to begin with :—

"BANNOCKBURN.

"Ecoissais, qui avez saigné sous Wallace,  
Ecoissais, que Bruce a souvent conduits,  
Soyez les bienvenus à votre lit sanglant  
Ou à la victoire glorieuse !

"Voici le jour et voici l'heure,  
Voyez le front de la bataille se rembrunir ;  
Voyez approcher les forces de l'orgueilleux Edouard—  
Edouard ! les chaînes et l'esclavage !

"Qui sera un infâme traître !  
Qui peut remplir sa tombe d'un lâche  
Qui assez bas pour être esclave ?  
Traître ! lâche ! tourne et fuis !

"Que pour le roi et la loi de l'Ecosse  
Vout tirer avec vigueur l'épée de la liberté,  
Vivre homme libre, ou périr homme libre ?  
Calédonien, alions avec moi !

"Par les maux et les peines de l'oppression !  
Par vos fils aux chaînes de l'esclave !  
Nous tarirons nos plus précieuses veines,  
Mais ils seront—ils seront libres !

"Jetons à bas ces fiers usurpateurs !  
Un tyran tombe dans chaque ennemi !  
La liberté est dans chaque coup !  
En avant ! vaincre ou mourir !"

## XVIII.—ROBERT BURNS AND THE EXCISE.

*By R. W. MACFADZEAN.*

THE facts of Burns's Excise career are simple enough. In December, 1787, he wrote to the Earl of Glencairn, "I wish to get into the Excise." Early in 1788 "kind old Sandy Wood," the surgeon who treated his crushed limb, interested himself with Graham of Fintray to get him the appointment, with the result that his name was at once put on the list. In April he was the bearer of the Board's order for his instruction for six weeks in his future duties to Mr. James Findlay, officer, Tarbolton. (This document is quaint reading to Revenue Officers now-a-days.) In the end of May, 1788, Burns, having finished his instructions, went to Ellisland with his commission in his pocket. He did not, however, get employed till the following year, and was promoted to a division on 28th July, 1790. All available evidence

proves that Burns earnestly desired the appointment. His farming had failed, his cultivation of the Muses had not met with the reward it merited, and the Excise appointment probably saved him and his from great privation.

Every proof exists that he became an energetic and faithful officer, and that he bore his commission with fidelity to the last. Only one passing cloud darkened his official escutcheon, and far too much was made of it by his biographers, Lockhart and Cunningham.

Before the French Revolutionary movement degenerated into the Reign of Terror, it awakened the sympathy of all earnest Liberals in this country, and few people will now affirm that his participation in this feeling did not do the poet credit.



In the spring of 1792 he committed the indiscretion of sending four rusty old carronades, which he had captured with the smuggling brig in the Solway, to the French Government. This practical joke had serious consequences. They were stopped at Dover, and an inquiry was ordered to be made into "Mr. Burns's" political opinions. The result was a verbal caution. His loyalty was never really doubted, and until the date of his fatal illness he was a zealous Volunteer in the Dumfries corps.

Sufficient publicity has, perhaps, not been given to the fact that about 35 years ago great additional light was thrown upon Burns's official career. Mr. James Macfadzean, now superannuated Collector of Glasgow, was at that time engaged at Somerset House in the removal of old stores to the new wing, when he discovered among the books of the Scotch Board several in which the name of the poet Robert Burns appeared.

There were five pages in different books which contained his name—and these were—First, a scheme of the Dumfries District, in which the poet's name occurs in three separate stations; second, a list of persons recommended for promotion to the rank of supervisor, with dates of appointment, etc., containing the poet's name; third, a similar list of later date, where there appears opposite the poet's name the impressive entry—"Dead." (It is interesting to notice here that the next man on the list—James Lindsay—was appointed supervisor of Dunblane District on the 10th August, 1797, proving that if the poet had lived in all probability he would have received the appointment.) Burns's name remained on the list till his

death, and he was aware of the fact. In 1795 he wrote to Patrick Heron :—"I am on the supervisors' list, and as we come on there by precedence, in two or three years I shall be at the head of the list, and appointed of course." Fourth, a page, Letter B., from an alphabetical register in which the official characters of the officers were recorded at the head office. The poet's character is here given, "Never tryed—a poet," with the subsequent interlineation—"turns out well." Fifth, a page, Letter B., from a similar register compiled three years later. Burns's character given here is, "The poet—does pretty well." From an inspection of the characters given on the register it is evident that they were drawn out with great candour, and that of Burns, it is pleasing to observe, is about the average.

Probably the most important book found was a "Register of Censures," embracing the whole period of the poet's service. It appeared to be a faithful record of everything of this kind issued by the Board, from cautions for trifling irregularities to dismissals. This volume was carefully searched by Mr. Macfadzean, and, as all lovers of Burns will be glad to know, the poet's name was conspicuous by its absence.

From inquiries recently instituted in Somerset House by Sir Robert Micks it has transpired that these interesting registers are no longer in existence. It was always understood that they were carefully preserved at the head office, and it is deeply to be regretted that there was no one there sufficiently alive to their importance to save them from destruction.

#### XIX.—SALE OF TAM O'SHANTER INN, AT AYR.

THE Tam o'Shanter Inn, situated in High Street, Ayr, and known all over the world as the rendezvous of Tam o'Shanter and Souter Johnny, his ancient trusty, drouthy crony, was exposed for sale by public roup in the King's Arms Hotel, on November 2, 1892. The property belonged to the Weavers' Incorporation, but on that body becoming extinct it fell to the Crown. Application was made by

the Town Council to the Crown asking it as a gift. This application, however, was refused, and the Crown authorities determined to sell it. There was a large attendance, and bidding was brisk, the upset price—£2500—being surpassed to the extent of £610. The property fell to the bid of Councillor Fraser, Ayr, at £3190.

In connection with this sale the *Glasgow*



*Herald* said :—" Did not the good teetotal folk of Ayr miss a great chance in connection with the sale of Tam o'Shanter Inn? This inn is situated in the High Street, and is well known to those who visit the famous town for the purpose of seeing and making themselves acquainted with everything connected with the name and fame of Burns, whether real or mythical. It has been supposed that this inn was the howff in which the two cronies, Douglas Graham and John Davidson, whom the poet took as models for Tam o'Shanter and Souter Johnny, were in the habit of meeting on market days and 'bousing at the nappy.' Burns is also believed to have had many a delectable sederunt in the same place. Whether these things are true or the reverse, they form the basis of a tradition suitable enough for an inn, where the special attractions are a chair in which Burns used to sit, and a quaich from which he used to drink.

" Pious visitors to the house have the privilege of sitting in the hallowed chair for nothing, and drinking from the sacred cup on paying for the tippie, which is generally whisky. Many a fool has sat in the chair and been none the wiser; and many a wise

man has drained the cup until he became a fool—all to the glory of Burns, who probably never saw either chair or quaich. On the Weavers' Incorporation, to which the property belonged, becoming extinct, it fell to the Crown, who, declining to give it as a gift to the Town Council, determined to sell it to the highest bidder. This is so like the Crown, which has no respect for Scottish rights or sympathy with Scottish wrongs. But what was the chance missed by the Ayr teetotallers? Why, the chance of purchasing the Tam o'Shanter Inn, and converting it into a temperance hotel, where the chair could be let at so much a 'sit,' and the quaich sent round at so much a 'sip,' the tippie being, of course, of the temperance order. Perhaps Councillor Fraser, who obtained the property for £3190, after a keen competition, is a teetotaller in disguise, and will horrify the Burns maniacs by transforming the show into a nine-days' wonderment. He could, if he saw fit, use the cup for holding teetotal pledges, and split up the chair to make lucifer matches for lighting the tobacco of pipes all denominations."

## XX.—SOME BURNS RELICS.

BY JOHN MUIR.

DURING the past year or two I have collected a few relics and notes relating to the Poet which I think ought to be preserved in BURNSIANA.

A BURNS TUMBLER.—Mrs. Hutchinson, daughter of Colonel James Glencairn Burns, the third son of Robert Burns, presented Mr. John Muir with a tumbler originally the property of our National Poet. The relic is enclosed in a handsome oak case, lined with green velvet, and secured by a lock. On one side of the tumbler is engraved an enlarged copy of the Poet's Seal, or Burns's Arms, as it is styled by the family; and on the other side the following inscription cut out on the glass :—" This Glass, once the property of Robert Burns, was presented by the Poet's Widow to James Robinson, Esq., and given by his Widow to her son-in-law, Major James

Glencairn Burns. 1840." The following letter, in the holograph of the donor, gives the history of the relic :—

3 BERKELEY STREET,  
CHELTENHAM, JULY 6th, 1892.

MY DEAR MR. MUIR,— . . . I purpose sending you by the parcels post to-night, enclosed in a box, a tumbler that belonged to my grandfather, the Poet, and hope you will accept it from me.

I believe he had four of them, but one has been broken. The one I now send you was given by my grandmother, Jean Armour, to Mr. James Robinson, of Sunderland. He was father of my mother, who died when I was born.

When my father returned from India, his mother-in-law, Mrs. Robinson, gave this tumbler to my father, and he had the inscrip-

tion and his father's coat of arms engraved on the glass. . . . Now for the history of the box:—It was made from one of the piles of old London Bridge. The light pieces of oak are from the 'Royal George.' My father had them given him by friends. . . .—  
Yours sincerely,

S. HUTCHINSON."

AULD LANG SYNE IN HAWAIIAN.—In presenting the readers with a specimen of this curiosity I cannot do better than quote the words of the translator, Mr. W. F. Wilson, who sent it to me. Mr. Wilson says:—"This is the only attempt, so far as I am aware, to give in Hawaiian any of Burns's songs. I may further mention that it is next to impossible to translate into Hawaiian and make the verses either rhyme or to have the same number of feet in each line."

"A nolaila no ka manawa i hala, kuu hoalauna,  
No ka manawa loihi i hala,  
A e lawe kaua i ke kiaha o ke aloha  
No ka manawa loihi i hala."

The translation was first published in the *Paradise of the Pacific*, December, 1891.

UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF BURNS.—"Dear Sir,—Any more letters for me that may come to your care, send them to Dumfries, directed to be detained till called for.—I mean this direction only for a week; afterwards direct to me at Mossgiel, near Mauchline:—To-day I set out for a ride thro' Northumberlandshire. I beg you or Mr. Creech will acquaint me whenever he returns.—I am, Dear sir, yours,  
ROBERT BURNS.

Berrywell, 24th May, 1787.

P.S.—I rec<sup>d</sup> a bill from Mr. Pattison, which he has wrote to you about.—My letter granting receipt had miscarried, but I have wrote him again to-day.—R.B.

Mr. Hill, at Mr. Creech's shop, Edinburgh.  
—Bears postmark thus: DUNSE."

The Caledonian Society of Christchurch, Canterbury, N.Z. paid £10 for above letter in May, 1884.

UNPUBLISHED NOTE OF BURNS.—The following interesting note in the handwriting of

Burns is in the collection of George Esdaile, Esq., Platt-in-Rusholm. On a piece of paper 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. by 4 in., is written the following memo. :—

"Please send me by the Bearer, my servt., a bar of shoeing iron, which place to acct. of [2/9.]—Gentlemen, your very humble servt.,  
ROBERT BURNS.

Ellisland, October 8th, 1790.

To Messrs Cr...bies & Co.,  
Merchts., Dumfries."

Messrs Crosbies marked the price of the bar as 2s. 9d., and put the order on the file where it must have remained many years, as the rust has acted on the paper and eroded the "os" in their name.

UNPUBLISHED NOTE.—The following Excise Notice, in the holograph of the poet, served upon Robt. Moore, Esq., was presented to the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Observatory by Wm. Johnston, Esq. of Cowhill:—

"Robert Moore in Dumfries I hereby intimate to you that by decret of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Dumfries you are fined in the sum of 1 £ Ster. for making bricks without entry—and if the said sum be not paid within 14 days from this date you will incur an additional expence of 2d on each 1 Sh. Ster.

ROBERT BURNS.

26 Oct. 1789."

A BURNS RELIC.—Mr. Wright, of the Strath-broke Hotel, Broxburn, has purchased for a handsome sum the window of a house in Kirkliston, originally an inn at which Burns passed a night in one of his journeys from Edinburgh. On one of the panes the poet scratched the lines:

"The ants about a clod employ their cares  
And think the business of the world is theirs.  
Lo! waxen combs, seem palaces to bees,  
And mites conceive the world to be a cheese."

The window is being suitably encased, and will be placed in a prominent position in the hotel.

The Rev. Robert Aris Willmott is a name well known to collectors as the editor of various editions of Burns's poems. Three of

his editions are recorded in the catalogue, and preserved in the collection, bearing the name of the late Mr. James M'Kie, Kilmar-nock—one under 1865 and two under 1866. In Mr. Gibson's Bibliography there is a Wil-mott edition under 1858, and also the two under 1866 as in the M'Kie Library; but Mr. M'Kie does not record the 1858 edition, nor Mr. Gibson the one dated 1865. The 1858 and 1866 editions are in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow. The British Museum has two of the foregoing editions—1865 and one of the 1866 issues—and, in edition, and by the same editor, one under 1856 (presumably the first of the series), and another without date, but noted within brackets as 1880. These last two are not to be found in the M'Kie or Mitchell Library collections; and, except by Mr. John P. Anderson, are not recorded in any of the Bibliographies. Quite recently I bought from a London bookseller a copy of the 1856 edition. As it is probably the initial volume of the series—at least it is the first known to collectors—perhaps it may interest your readers if I transcribe the imprint:—"The Poetical Works of Robert Burns. Edited by the Rev. Robert Aris Wilmot, Incumbent of Bear Wood. Illustrated by John Gilbert. [Foolscap octavo]. London: George Routledge & Co., 1856."

A FORGED LETTER.—To Mr. John Hill, Weaver, Cumnock:

Mauchline, June 11th.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is indeed impossible for me to speak upon such a subject as the loss you have suffered. Allow me, however, to send you this expression of my sympathy and sorrow at the loss of a friend. It is another part of ourselves gone when we lose a *friend*. God keep those we have left, as very few are worth the praying for, and ourselves probably least of all. I was much pleased at your expression in your intimation to me, as I am now aware that you understood my meaning and character, and that although our last meeting was noisy, I hope you took no umbrage at anything spoken by Mr. Nicol, whose character is somewhat noisy in its expression. Believe me, I did not intend to go beyond anything that was

unfriendly, and your communication has shown me that. I am waiting to see you.—Believe me to be, yours most affectionately,  
ROBT. BURNS.

Mr. ROBERT BURNS-BEGG writes in a contemporary:—"The experiences of Burns and his wife at Ellisland were all that heart could desire. He was leading a quiet domesticated yet active life, and alike in body and mind was experiencing the full benefit of it, while his wife in the loving companionship of her husband, and in the sweet cares of her family and household, found all that her womanly nature required to fill to overflowing her cup of happiness. In a hitherto unpublished poem by Burns, we have the following eloquent expression of the contentment, love, and happiness which formed the 'home atmosphere' of the poet and his wife."

"To gild her worth I asked no wealthy dower,  
My toil could feed her, and my arm defend;  
I envied no man's riches; no man's power,  
I asked of none to give, of none to lend.

And she the faithful partner of my care,  
When ruddy evening streaked the western sky;  
Looked towards the uplands if her mate was there,  
Or through the beeches cast an anxious eye."

DISCOVERY OF BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.—A Burns find was recently made by a private collector at a book sale. It is a manuscript volume from the collection of Riddell of Glenriddell, the poet's friend and neighbour when he was in Ellisland, and contains three holograph poems by Burns. Two of these have not been published. One is a satire on the then Duke of Queensberry, who is taunted with the desertion of the King for the Prince of Wales's party. The other is a "bucolic" concerning "Grizzel Grimm, the witch of Cluden," said to have been suggested by a tombstone in Dunblane Churchyard with a curious epitaph on a woman so designated. It is clever, but its humour is of too coarse a type for publication. Accompanying it is a ludicrous cartoon, which, it is suggested, may be the work of Captain Grose. The third set of verses are those on hearing a mavis sing on the 25th of January. They are bound up with a large number of documents, many copies, some originals, of great interest to



antiquarians, to Dumfries, and its district. Among these is a copy of the letter addressed by the Duke, who is the object of Burns's satire, to King George III., praying for a restoration to the Royal favour, which he had lost in consequence of the support extended by him to the Prince Regent.

*Just published, First attempted Translation of Burns into Italian.*

POESIE DI ROBERT BURNS. Prima Versione Italiana, di Ulisse Ortensi, autore della traduzione della, "Poesie del Poe." With English Preface by John Muir, Galston.

In January, 1892, an Italian gentleman, Signor Ulisse Ortensi, published a translation of Edgar Allan Poe's poems, purporting to be *prima versione Italiana in prosa*. Having made the acquaintance of the Signor through the mutual friend to whom the book is dedicated, I ventured to suggest that he should translate Burns, who, I thought, would be quite as good an investment for his intellectual capital as the American poet. Signor Ortensi promised to do so on condition that I would give what assistance I could, and write a short English Preface. All this has been arranged, and so far carried out satisfactorily, with the result that the first part of his Burns is now published. Having the MS. of the "Jolly Beggars," before me, perhaps I may as well give the reader a sample of our friend's version. I transcribe the first two verses of the "Soldier's Song," with the connecting "Recitativo," and the "Maid's Song" *in extenso*.—

Gli Allegri Pezzenti.

*Aria*—Del Soldato.

"Io sono un figlio di Marte, sono stato in malto guerre,  
Emostro le me ferite e le cicatrice in qualunque  
luogo io arrivo;  
Questo qui fu per una fanciulla, e quest'altra in una  
trinira,  
Quando feci il benvenuto ai Francesi al suono del  
tamburo.  
Il mio noviziato l'ho fatto la'dove il mio capitano  
esalo, l'ultimo suo respiro,  
Quando la sanguinosa morte se spandeva sulle altura  
di Abram;  
Eterminai il mio negozio quando la galante partita  
fu ginocata.  
Ed il Moro fu presso al suono del tamburo.

RECITATIVO.

'Egli finisì; e l'assito trema,  
Sopra il ruggito del coro;  
Mentre spaventati i topi voltano dietro  
I buchi più recondita;  
Un valente suonatore di violino dal suo contaccio,  
Egli grida "ancora!"  
Ma s'alza la marziale donna  
E fa cessare l'alto fracasso.'

*Aria*—La Ganza del Soldato.

"Io una volta fui una fanciulla, sebbene io non possa  
dire quando  
E tuttora il mio piacere e proprio nei giovanotti,  
Mio padre ero uno di un corpo di dragoni,  
Nessuna meraviglia che io sia l'amante di un soldato.  
Il primo dei miei amanti fu un celebre fanfarone,  
E il suo mestiere era di battere l'assordante tam-  
buro,  
Le sue gambe erano tanto solide e le sue gote erano  
così rosse,  
Che io ebbi trasporto pel pio giovane soldato.  
Ma il reverendo vecchio cappellano lo mise in im-  
barazzo,  
La sciabola io abbandonai per amore della chiesa;  
Egli avventuro l'anima ed io rischiai il corpo,  
E fu allora che io mi mostrai falsa al mio giovane  
soldato.  
Presto io fui interamente disgustata del mio santifi-  
cato imbecille,  
Un intero reggimento io presi per marito,  
Dal dorato sperone al piffero io fui pronta,  
Non domando altro fuorché un giovane soldato.  
Ma la pace essa mi ha ridotta a domandare Pele-  
minosina per disperazione.  
Finché io ritrovai il mio vecchio fanciullo alla fiera  
di Cunningham,  
I suoi cenci del reggimento dondolava vana così  
allegramente,  
Che il mio cuore entro di nuovo in gioia per  
giovane soldato.  
E così io ho vissuto—io non so quanto  
Ed ancora io posso unirmi ad un bicchiere ad un  
canto;  
Ma Finché con ambo le mani io posso tenere un  
bicchier fermo,  
Esso e qui per te, mio eroe, mio giovane soldato.

Signor Ortensi has not entered into the present undertaking in the hope of making a fortune thereby. He knows better. His Poe scarcely cleared itself, and he will be pleased if Burns turns out a somewhat better speculation. There are, as I know, many students and collectors of Burns literature who would like to procure a copy of this the first translation of Burns into Italian. I have received a good many names from America. The price is four shillings, post paid, for



each part. There are two parts in all—one containing the poems and the other the songs.

BURNS AS A FARMER.—The following extract is from a work entitled *View of Agriculture in Ayrshire*, published in 1793. The author, Colonel Fullerton, is referred to in the *Vision*, as “Brydon’s Brave Ward.”

“In order to prevent the danger arising from horned cattle in studs and straw-yards, the best mode is to cut out the budding knob, or root of the horn, while the calf is very young. This was suggested to me by Mr. Robert Burns, whose general talents are no less conspicuous than the poetic powers which have done so much honour to the county in which he was born.”

A PAINFUL NOTE.—The following note to Mr. William Stewart, of Closeburn Castle was sold at Messrs. Sotheby’s rooms in May 1892. It is endorsed—“This day forwarded and enclosed in a letter to Mr. Burns, £3 3s od. st., and for which I hold no security in writing—WILLIAM STEWART.”

“Dumfries, January 15, 1795.

“This is a painful disagreeable letter, and the first of the kind I ever wrote—I am truly in serious distress for three or four guineas; can you, my dear sir, accommodate me? It will, indeed, truly oblige me. These accursed times, by stopping up importation, have for this year, at least, lopt off a full third part of my income, and with my large family, this to me is a distressing matter.—Farewell, and God bless you.

“R. BURNS.”

The following extracts are from the Kirk-Session Records of Mauchline:—

“APRIL 2nd, 1786.—The Session being informed that Jean Armour, an unmarried woman, is said to be with child, and that she has gone off from the place of late, to reside

elsewhere, the Session think it their duty to enquire . . . But appoint James Lamie and William Fisher to speak to the parents.”

“APRIL 9th, 1786.—James Lamie reports that he spoke to Mary Smith, mother to Jean Armour, who told him that she did not suspect her daughter to be with child, that she was gone to Paisley to see her friends, and would return soon.”

“JUNE 18th, 1886.—Jean Armour, called, compeared not, but sent a letter directed to the minister, the tenor whereof follows:—

‘I am heartily sorry that I have given and must give your Session trouble on my account. I acknowledge that I am with child, and Robert Burns in Moss-giel is the father. I am with great respect,

Your most humble servant,

JEAN ARMOUR.

MACHLIN, 13th JUNE, 1786.’”

The officer is ordered to summon Robert Burns to attend this day eight days.

“JUNE 25th, 1786.—Compeared Robert Burns and acknowledges himself the father of Jean Armour’s child[ren].\*

ROBERT BURNS.”

“AUGUST 6th, 1786.—Robert Burns, John Smith, Mary Lindsay, Jean Armour, and Agnes Auld, appeared before the Congregation professing their repentance for the sin of fornication, and they having each appeared two several Sabbaths formerly were this day rebuked and absolved from the scandal.”†

“AUGUST 5th, 1788.—Compeared Robert Burns with Jean Armour, his alleged spouse. They both acknowledged their irregular marriage, and their sorrow for that irregularity, and desiring that the Session will take such steps as may seem to them proper in order to the solemn confirmation of the said marriage.

The Session taking this affair under their consideration agree that they both be rebuked for their acknowledged irregularity, and that

\* The letters in brackets appear to have been added in at a later time, in lighter ink than that employed for the rest of the word.

† There are no Session-Book entries about the two previous appearances of Burns, but we know from a letter of his to Richmond (Scott Douglas, IV., 134), that the date of one of these appearances was July 9th.

they be taken solemnly engaged to adhere faithfully to one another as husband and wife all the days of their life.

In regard the session have a tittle [*sic*] in law to some fine for behoof of the poor, they agree to refer to Mr. Burns his own generosity. The above sentence was accordingly executed, and the Session absolved the said parties from any scandal on this account.

WILLIAM AULD, *Moderator*.

ROBERT BURNS.

JEAN ARMOUR.

Mr. Burns gave a guinea note for behoof of the poor."

#### REID'S MINIATURE PORTRAIT OF BURNS.

—In the correspondence of Burns we find mention made of the following six portraits of himself, which, with the exception of the last named, have all been traced to their respective owners:—(1) Nasmyth's oval bust portrait, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, (cat. No. 34): (2) Beugo's engraving of this picture; Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, (cat. No. 139 of engraved portraits): (3) Mier's silhouette profile, also in the collection of the last named Gallery (cat. No. 156): (4) the picture by David Allan, illustrating the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, in the possession of Mrs. Hutchinson, daughter of Colonel James Glencairn Burns: (5) the portrait painted by an unknown artist, then on a flying visit to Dumfries, in the collection of the late Rev. Dr. P. Hately Waddell: and (6) the portrait on ivory by Reid, (Alexander Reid)? Dumfries, described in Volume II. of BURNSIANA.

I have received from an antiquarian gentleman a most interesting collection of notes, consisting of unpublished details concerning Reid and his family, which I intend publishing shortly. Meantime, I shall be obliged to any reader who could, and would, furnish me with particulars respecting Reid, his life, and style of painting, and where his drawings may be seen. I have only succeeded in expiscating the following particulars: In 1770, Alexander Reid, exhibited in London "A head of Mr. Ouchterlony, born in the year 1691." He is mentioned by Allan Cunningham in his "British Painters" as having

painted the heads of Burns and his Jean on ivory; and, in a letter to Mrs. Riddell, the poet says: "I am just sitting to Reid of this town [Dumfries is meant] for a miniature, and I think he has hit by far the best likeness of me ever taken." There is also a portrait of Highland Mary amissing. It is said to be an original.

TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.—To Mr. Gavin Hamilton, Mauchline:—

Machline, October 18th, 1783.

SIR,—As you are pleased to give us the offer of a private bargain of your cows you intend for sale, my brother and I this day took a look of them, and a friend with us, on whose judgment we could something depend, to enable us to form an estimate. If you are still intending to let us have them in that way, please appoint a day that we may wait on you, and either agree amongst ourselves or else fix on men to whom we may refer it, tho' I hope we will not need any reference.—I am, Sir, Your humble Servt., ROBERT BURNS.

P.S.—Whatever of your dairy utensils you intend to dispose of we will probably purchase. R. B.

To Alex. Blair, Esquire, Catrine House, Catrine.

Machline, 3rd April, 1788.

SIR,—I returned here yesterday, and received your letter, for which I return you my heartiest and warmest thanks. I am afraid I cannot at this moment accede to your request, as I am much harrassed with the care and anxiety of farming business, which at present is not propitious to poetry; but if I have an opportunity you shall learn of my progress in a few weeks.

I cannot but feel gratitude to you for the kindly manner by which you have shewn your interest in my endeavours; and I remain, Your obedient servant, ROBERT BURNS.

In the above letter to Mr. Hamilton, to whom Burns addressed the poetical Dedication of his Kilmarnock edition, we have an instance of the Poet spelling his name with two syllables. The letter to Mr. Robert

Aitken, dated April 3rd, 1786, is generally considered as the last document, with an exception to be mentioned, to which he exhibited this form of his surname. Chambers notes that, in the records of the St. James' Tarbolton Lodge, he signs the minutes, as Depute-master, from 27th July, 1784, to 1st

March, 1786, "Robert Burness," after which date, the name appears contracted into the form in which it is known all over the world. However, in writing to his relations in Montrose, he continued the old spelling for some months longer.

## XXI.—A BURNS PILGRIMAGE.

*By "H. H." In the CENTURY MAGAZINE, September, 1883.*

A SHINING-BEACHED crescent of country facing to the sunset, and rising higher and higher to the east till it becomes mountain, is the county of Ayrshire, fair and famous among the Southern Scotch Highlands. To a sixty-mile measure by air, between its north and south promontories, it stretches a curving coast of ninety; and when Robert Burns strolled over its breezy uplands, he saw always beautiful and mysterious silver lines of land thrusting themselves out into the mists of the sea, pointing to far-off island peaks, seeming sometimes to bridge and sometimes to wall vistas only ending in sky. These lines are as beautiful, elusive, and luring now as then, and in the alienable loyalty of nature bear testimony to-day to their lover.

This is the greatest crown of the hero and the poet. Other great men hold fame by failing records which moth and fire destroy. The places that knew them know them no more when they are dead. Marble and canvas and parchment league in vain to keep green his memory who did not love and consecrate by his life-blood, in fight or in song, the soil where he trod. But for him who has done this,—who fought well, sang well,—the morning cloud, and the wild rose, and broken blades of grass under men's feet, become immortal witnesses; so imperishable, after all, are what we are in the habit of calling the "perishable things of this earth."

More than two hundred years ago, when the followers and holders of the different baronies of Ayrshire compared respective dignities and values, they made a proverb which ran :—

"Carrick for a man; Kyle for a coo;  
Cunningham for butter and cheese; Galloway for  
woo."

Before the nineteenth century set in, the proverb should have been changed, for Kyle is the land through which "Bonny Doon" and Irvine Water run; and there has been never a man in all Carrick of whom Carrick can be proud, as is Kyle of Robert Burns. It has been said that a copy of his poems lies on every Scotch cottager's shelf, by the side of the Bible. This is probably not very far from the truth. Certain it is, that in the villages where he dwelt there seems to be no man, no child, who does not apparently know every detail of the life he lived there, nearly a hundred years ago.

"Will ye be driving over to Tarbolton in the morning?" said the pretty young vice-landlady of the King's Arms at Ayr, when I wrote my name in her visitor's book late one Saturday night.

"What made you think of that?" I asked, amused.

"And did ye not come on account o' Burns?" she replied. "There's been a many from your country here by reason of him this summer. I think you love him in America a'most as well as we do oursel's. It's vary seldom the English come to see anythin' aboot him. They've so many poets o' their own, I suppose, is the reason o' their not thinkin' more o' Burns."

All that there was unflattering in this speech I forgave by reason of the girl's sweet low voice, pretty grey eyes, and gentle, refined hospitality. She might have been the daughter of some country gentleman, welcom-



ing a guest to the house. And she took as much interest in making all the arrangements for my drive to Tarbolton the next morning as if it had been a pleasure excursion for herself. It is but a dull life she leads, helping her widowed mother keep the King's Arms—dull, and unprofitable too, I fear, for it takes four men-servants and seven women to keep up the house, and I saw no symptom of any coming or going of customers in it. A stillness as of a church in week-days reigned throughout the establishment. "At the races and when the yeomanry come," she said, there was something to do; but "in the winter nothing, except at the times of the county balls. You know, ma'am, we've many county families here," she remarked with gentle pride, "and they all stop with us."

There is a compensation to the lower orders of a society where ranks and castes are fixed, which does not readily occur at first sight to the democratic mind naturally rebelling against such defined distinctions. It is very much to be questioned whether, in a republic, the people who find themselves temporarily lower down in the social scale than they like to be or expect to stay, feel, in their consciousness of the possibility of rising, half so much pride or satisfying pleasure as do the lower classes in England, for instance, in their relations with those whom they serve, whose dignity they seem to share by ministering to it.

The way from Ayr to Tarbolton must be greatly changed since the day when the sorrowful Burns family trod it, going from the Mount Oliphant Farm to that of Lochlea. Now it is for miles a smooth road, on which horse's hoofs ring merrily, and neat little stone houses, with pretty yards, line it on both sides for some distance. The ground rises almost immediately, so that the dwellers in these little suburban houses get fine off-looks seaward and a wholesome breeze in at their windows. The houses are built joined by twos, with a yard in common. They have three rooms besides the kitchen, and they rent for twenty-five pounds a year; so no industrious man of Ayr need be badly lodged. Where the houses leave off, hedges begin—thorn and beech, untrimmed and luxuriant, with great outbursts of white honeysuckle and

sweet-brier at intervals. As far as the eye could see were waving fields of wheat, oats, and "rye-grass," which last being just ripe was of a glorious red colour. The wheat-fields were rich and full, sixty bushels to the acre. Oats, which do not take so kindly to the soil and air, produce sometimes only forty-eight.

Burns was but sixteen when his father moved from Mount Oliphant to the Lochlea farm, in the parish of Tarbolton. It was in Tarbolton that he first went to a dancing-school, joined the Freemasons, and organised the club which, no doubt, cost him dear, "The Bachelors of Tarbolton." In the beginning, this club consisted only of five members besides Burns and his brother; afterward it was enlarged to sixteen. Burns drew up the rules, and the last one—the tenth—is worth remembering, as an unconscious defining on his part of his ideal of human life:—

"Every man proper for a member of this society must have a friendly, honest, open heart, above everything dirty or mean, and must be a professed lover of one or more of the sex. The proper person for this society is a cheerful, honest-hearted lad, who, if he has a friend that is true, and a mistress that is kind, and as much wealth as genteelly to make both ends meet, is just as happy as this world can make him."

Walking to-day through the narrow streets of Tarbolton, it is well-nigh impossible to conceive of such rollicking good cheer having made abiding-place there. It is a close, packed town, the houses of stone or white plaster—many of them low, squalid, with thatched roofs and walls awry; those that are not squalid are grim. The streets are winding and tangled; the people look poor and dull. As I drove up to the "Crown Inn," the place where the Tarbolton Freemasons meet now, and where some of the relics of Burns's Freemason days are kept, the "first bells" were ringing in the belfry of the old church opposite, and the landlord of the inn replied with a look of great embarrassment to my request to see the Burns relics.

"It's the Sabbath, mem."

Then he stood still scratching his head for



a few moments, and then sets off, at full run, down the street without another word.

"He's gone to the head Mason," explained the landlady. "It takes three to open the chest. I think ye'll na see it the day," and she turned on her heel with a frown and left me.

"They make much account o' the Sabbath in this country," said my driver. "Another day ye'd do better."

Thinking of Burns's lines to the "Unco Guid," I strolled over into the church-yard opposite, to await the landlord's return. The bell-ringer had come down, and followed me curiously about among the graves. One very old stone had carved upon it two high-top boots; under these, two low shoes; below these two kneeling figures, a man and a woman, cut in high relief; no inscription of any sort.

"What can it mean?" I asked.

The bell-ringer could not tell; it was so old nobody knew anything about it. His mother, now ninety years of age, remembered seeing it when she was a child, and it looked just as old then as now.

"There's a many strange things in this grave-yard," said he; and then he led me to a corner where, inclosed by swinging chains, and stone posts, was a carefully kept square of green turf, on which lay a granite slab. "Every year comes the money to pay for keeping that grass green," he said, "and no name to it. It's been going on that way for fifty years."

The stone wall around the grave-yard was dilapidated, and in parts was falling down.

"I suppose this old wall was here in Burns's time," I said.

"Ay, yes," said the bell-ringer, and pointing to a low, thatched cottage just outside it, "and yon shop—many's the time he's been in it playin' his tricks."

The landlord of the inn now came running up, with profuse apologies for the ill success of his mission. He had been to the head Mason, hoping he would come over and assist in the opening of the chest, in which were kept a Mason's apron worn by Burns, some jewels of his, and a book of minutes kept by him. But "bein' s it's the Sabbath," and "he's sick in bed," and it was "against

the rules to open the regalia chest unless three Masons were present," the kindly landlord, piling up reason after reason, irrespective of their consistency with each other, went on to explain that it would be impossible; but I might see the chair in which Burns always sat. This was a huge oaken chair, black with age, and furrowed with names cut deep in the wood. It was shaped and proportioned like a child's high chair, and had precisely such a rest for the feet as is put on children's high chairs. To this day the Grand Mason sits in it at their meetings, and will so long as the St. James Lodge exists.

"They've been offered hundreds of pounds for that chair, mem, plain as it is. You'd not think it; but there's no money'd buy it from the lodge," said the landlord.

The old club-house where the jolly "Bachelors of Tarbolton" met in Burns's day, is a low, two-roomed, thatched cottage, half in ruins. The room where the bachelors smoked, drank, and sang, is now little more than a cellar filled with rubbish and filth,—nothing left but the old fire place to show that it was ever inhabited. In the other half of the cottage lives a labourer's family,—father, mother, and a young child: their one room, with its bed built into the wall, and their few delf dishes on the dresser, is probably much like the room in which Burns first opened his wondrous eyes. The man was lying on the floor playing with the baby. At the name of Burns, he sprang out with a hearty "Ay, weel," and ran out in his blue stocking feet to show me the cellar, of which, it was plainly to be seen, he was far prouder than of his more comfortable side of the house. The name by which the Inn was called in Burns's day he did not know. But "He's a Mason over there: he'll know," he cried; and, before I could prevent him, he had darted, still shoeless, across the road, and asked the question of a yet poorer labourer, who was taking his Sunday on his door-sill with two bairns between his knees. He had heard, but had "forgotten." "Feyther'll know," said the wife, coming forward with the third bairn, a baby, in her arms. "I'll rin an' ask feyther." The old man tottered out and gazed with a vacant, feeble look at me, while he replied impatiently to his

daughter : "Manson's Inn, 'twas called ; ye've heard it times eneuch."

"I dare say you always drink Burns's health at the lodge when you meet," I said to the labourer.

"Ay, ay, his health's ay dronkit," he said, with a coarse laugh, "weel dronkit."

A few rods to the east, and down the very road Burns was wont to come and go between Lochlea and Tarbolton, still stands "Willie's mill,"—cottage, and mill, and shed, and barn, all in one low, long, oddly joined (or jointed) building of irregular heights, like a telescope pulled out to its full length ; a little brook and a bit of gay garden in the front. In the winter the mill goes by water from a lake near by ; in the summer by steam—a great change since the night when Burns went

"Todlin' down on Willie's mill,"

and though he thought he

"Was na fou, but just had plenty,"

could not for the life of him make out to count the moon's horns.

"To count her horns, wi' a' my power,  
I set mysel' ;—  
But whether she had three or four  
I could na tell."

To go by road from Tarbolton to Lochlea farm is to go around three sides of a square, east, north, and then west again. Certain it is that Burns never took so many superfluous steps to do it ; and as I drove along I found absorbing interest in looking at the little cluster of farm buildings beyond the fields, and wondering where the light-footed boy used to "cut across" for his nightly frolics. There is nothing left at Lochlea now of him or his ; nothing save a worn lintel of the old barn. The buildings are all new, and there is a look of thrift and comfort about the place, quite unlike the face it must have worn in 1784. The house stands on a rising knoll, and from the windows looking westward and seaward there must be a fine horizon and headlands to be seen at sunset. Nobody was at home on this day except a bare footed servant girl, who was keeping the house while the family were at church. She came to the door with an expression of almost alarm, at the unwonted apparition of a carriage driv-

ing down the lane on Sunday, and a stranger coming in the name of a man dead so long ago. She evidently knew nothing of Burns except that, for some reason connected with him, the old lintel was kept and shown. She was impatient of the interruption of her Sabbath, and all the while she was speaking kept her finger in her book—"Footprints of Jesus"—at the place where she had been reading, and glanced at it continually, as if it were an amulet which could keep her from harm through the worldly interlude into which she had been forced.

"It's a pity ye came on the Sabba-day," remarked the driver again, as we drove away from Lochlea. "The country people 'ull not speak on the Sabbath." It would have been useless to try to explain to him that the spectacle of this Scottish "Sabba-day" was of itself of almost as much interest as the sight of the fields in which Robert Burns had walked and worked.

The farm of Mossgiel, which was Burns's next home after Lochlea, is about three miles from Tarbolton, and only one from Mauchline. Burns and his brother Gilbert had become tenants of it a few months before their father's death in 1784. It was stocked by the joint savings of the whole family ; and each member of the family was allowed fair rates of wages for all labour performed on it. The allowance to Gilbert and to Robert was seven pounds a year each, and it is said that, during the four years that Robert lived there, his expenses never exceeded this pittance.

To Mossgiel he came with new resolutions. He had already reaped some bitter harvests from the wild oats sown during the seven years at Lochlea. He was no longer a boy. He says of himself at this time :

"I entered on Mossgiel with a full resolution, 'Come, go ; I will be wise.'"

Driving up the long straight road which leads from the highway to the hawthorn fortress in which the Mossgiel farm buildings stand, one recalls these words, and fancies the brave young fellow striding up the field, full of new hope and determination. The hawthorn hedge to-day is much higher than a man's head, and completely screens from the road the farm-house and the outbuildings behind it. The present tenants have

lived on the farm forty years, the first twenty in the same house which stood there when Robert and Gilbert Burns pledged themselves to pay one hundred and twenty pounds a year for the farm. When the house was rebuilt, twenty years ago, the old walls were used in part, and the windows were left in the same places; but, instead of the low, sloping-roofed, garret-like room upstairs, where Burns used to sleep and write, are now comfortable chambers of modern fashion.

"Were you not sorry to have the old house pulled down?" I said to the comely, aged farm-wife.

"Deed, then, I was very prood," she replied; "it had na 'comodation, and the thatch took in the rain an' all that was vile."

In the best room of the house hung two autograph letters of Burns's plainly framed: one, his letter to the lass of —, asking her permission to print the poem he had addressed to her; the other, the original copy of the poem. These were "presented to the house by the brother of the lady," the woman said, and they had "a great value now." But when she first came to this part of the country she was "vary soorpreezed" to find the great esteem in which Burns's poetry was held. In the North, where she had lived, he was "na thoct weel of." Her father had never permitted a copy of his poems to be brought inside his doors, and had forbidden his children to read a word of them. "He thoct them too rough for us to read." It was not until she was a woman grown, and living in her husband's house, that she had ever ventured to disobey this parental command, and she did not now herself think they were "fitted for the reading of young pairsons." "There was much more discreet writin's," she said severely; an opinion which there was no gainsaying.

There is a broader horizon to be seen, looking westwards from the fields of Mossgiel, than from those of Lochlea; the lands are higher and nobler of contour. Superb trees, which must have been superb a century ago, stand to right and left of the house,—beeches, ashes, oaks, and planes. The fields which are in sight from the house are now all grass-grown. I have heard that, twenty years ago, it was confidently told in which field Burns,

ploughing late in the autumn, broke into the little nest of the

"Wee sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,"

whom every song-lover had known and pitied from that day to this, and whose misfortunes have answered ever since for a mint of re-assuring comparison to all of us, remembering that "the best-laid schemes o' mice an' men" must "gang aft alee;" and the other field, also near by, where grew that mountain daisy,

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipp'd flower,"

whose name is immortal in our hearts as that of Burns. This farm-wife, however, knew nothing about them. The stern air of the north country in which she had been reared still chilled somewhat her thoughts of Burns and her interest in his inalienable bond on the fields of her farm.

It is but a mile from Mossgiel's gate to Mauchline, the town of "bonnie Jean" and Nansie Tinnoch and Gavin Hamilton. Surely a strange-assorted trio to be comrades of one man. Their houses are still standing: Jean's a tumble-down, thatched cottage, looking out-of-place enough between the smart, new houses built on either side of it; Gavin Hamilton's, a dark, picturesque stone house, joined to the ruins of Mauchline Castle; and Nansie Tinnoch's, a black and dilapidated hovel, into which it takes courage to go. It stands snuggled up against the wall of the old grave-yard, part below it and part above it—a situation as unwholesome as horrible; a door at the head of the narrow stair-way opening out into the grave-yard itself, and the slanting old stones leering in at the smoky windows by crowds. In the days when all the "country side" met at the open air services in this church-yard,

"Some thinkin' on their sins, an' some on their claes," no doubt Nansie Tinnoch's was a lighter, whiter, cheerier place than now; else the "Jolly Beggars" would never have gone there to tipple.

It was the nooning between services when I reached Mauchline, and church-goers from a distance were taking their beer and crackers decorously in the parlour of the inn. As the intermission was only three-quarters of an hour long, this much of involuntary dissipation was plainly forced on them; but they did not



abuse it, I can testify. 'They partook of it as of a Passover: young men and maidens as sober and silent as if they had been doing solemn penance for sins, as indeed, from one point of view, it might perhaps be truly said that they were.

By dint of some difficult advances I drew one or two of them into conversation about the Mossiel farm and the disappearance of the old relics of Burns's life in that region. It was a great pity, I said, that the Mossiel house had to be taken down.

"Deed, then, it was na such thing," spoke up an elderly man. "It was na moor than a wreck, an' I'm the mon who did it."

He was the landlord of the farm, it appeared. He seemed much amused at hearing of the farm-wife's disapproval of Burns's verses and of her father's prohibition of them.

"He was a heepocritical auld Radical, if ye knows him," he said, angrily. "I hope we'll never have ony worse readin' in our country than Robert Bur-r-r-n-s." The prolongation of the "r" in the Scotch way of saying "Burns" is something that cannot be typographically represented. It is hardly a rolling of the "r," nor a multiplication of it; but it takes up a great deal more time and room than any one "r" ought to.

After the landlady had shown to me the big hall where the Freemasons meet, "the Burns's Mother Lodge," and the chest which used to hold the regalia at Tarbolton in Burns's day, and the little bedroom in which Stedman and Hawthorne had slept,—coming also to look at Burns's fields,—she told me in a mysterious whisper that there was a nephew of Burns in the kitchen, who would like to see me, if I would like to see him. "A nephew of Burns!" I exclaimed. "Weel, not exactly," she explained, "but he's a grand-nephew of Burns's wife; she that was Jean, ye know," with a deprecating nod and lowering of the eyelid. So fast is the clutch of a Scotch neighbourhood on its traditions of offended virtue, even to-day poor Jean cannot be mentioned by a landlady in her native town without a small stone cast backward at her.

Jean's grand-nephew proved to be a middle-aged man; not "ower weel-to-do," the landlady said. He had tried his hand at

doctoring both in Scotland and America,—a rolling stone evidently, with too much of the old fiery blood of his race in his veins for quiet and decorous prosperity. He, too, seemed only half willing to speak of poor "Jean"—his kinswoman; but he led me to the cottage where she had lived, and pointed out the window from which she was said to have leaned out many a night listening to the songs of her lover when he sauntered across from the Whiteford Arms, Johnny Pigeon's house, just opposite, "not fou, but having had plenty" to make him merry and affectionate. Johnny Pigeon's is a "co-operative store" now; and new buildings have altered the line of the street so that "Rob Mossiel" would lose his way there to-day.

The room in which Burns and his "bonnie Jean" were at last married in Gavin Hamilton's house, by Hamilton himself, is still shown to visitors. This room I had a greater desire to see than any other spot in Mauchline. "We can but try," said the grand-nephew; "but it's a small chance of seeing it the Sabba."

The sole tenant of this house now is the widow of a son of Gavin Hamilton's. Old, blind, and nearly helpless, she lives there alone with one family servant, nearly as old as herself, but hale, hearty, and rosy as only an old Scotch woman can be. This servant opened the door for us, her cap, calico gown, and white apron all alike bristling with starch, religion, and pride of family. Her mistress would not allow the room to be shown on the Sabbath, she said. Imploringly it was explained to her that no other day had been possible, and that I had come "all the way from America."

"Ye did na do weel to tak the Sabbath," was her only reply, as she turned on her heel to go with the fruitless appeal to her mistress. Returning, she said curtly,

"She winna shew it on the Sabbath."

At this crisis my companion, who had kept in the background, stepped forward with:

"You don't know me, Elspie, do ye?"

"No, sir," she said stiffly, bracing herself up mentally against any further heathenish entreaties.

"What, not know —— ?" repeating his name in full.



Presto! as if changed by a magician's trick, the stiff, starched, religious, haughty family retainer disappeared, and there stood, in the same cap, gown, and apron, a limber, rollicking, well-nigh improper old woman, who poked the grand-nephew in the ribs, clapped him on the shoulder, chuckling, ejaculating, questioning, wondering, laughing, all in a breath. Reminiscence on reminiscence followed between them.

"An' do ye mind Barry, too?" she asked. (This was an old man-servant of the house.) "An' many's the quirrel, an' many's the gree we had."

Barry was dead. Dead also was the beautiful girl whom my companion remembered well—dead of a broken heart before she was eighteen years of age. Forbidden to marry her lover, she had drooped and pined. He went to India and died. It was in a December the news of his death came, just at Christmas time, and in the next September she followed him.

"Ay, but she was a bonnie lass," said Elspie, the tears rolling down her face.

"I dare say she (nodding her head toward the house)—I dare say she's shed many a salt tear over it, but naeboddy'll ever know she repentit," quoth the grand-nephew.

"Ay, ay," said Elspie. "There's a wee bit closet in every hoos."

"'Twas in that room she died," pointing up to a small ivy-shaded window. "I closed her eyes wi' my hands. She's never spoken of. She was a bonnie lass."

The picture of this desolate old woman, sitting there alone in her house, helpless, blind, waiting for death to come and take her to meet that daughter whose young heart was broken by her cruel will, seemed to shadow the very sunshine on the greensward in the court. The broken arches and crumbling walls of the old stone abbey ruins seemed, in their ivy mantles, warmly, joyously venerable by contrast with the silent, ruined, stony old human heart still beating in the house they joined.

In spite of my protestations, the grand-nephew urged Elspie to show us the room. She evidently now longed to do it; but, casting a fearful glance over her shoulder, said:

"I daur na! I daur na! I could na open

the door that she'd na hear't," and she seemed much relieved when I made haste to assure her that on no account would I go into the room without her mistress's permission. So we came away, leaving her gazing regretfully after us, with her hand shading her eyes from the sun.

Going back from Mauchline to Ayr, I took another road, farther to the south than the one leading through Tarbolton, and much more beautiful, with superb beech trees meeting overhead, and gentlemen's country seats, with great parks, on either hand.

On this road is Montgomerie Castle, walled in by grand woods, which Burns knew so well.

"Ye banks and braes and streams around  
The castle o' Montgomery,  
Green be your woods and fair your flowers,  
Your waters never drumlie!  
There simmer first unfauld her robes,  
And there the langest tarry,  
For there I took the last fareweel  
O' my sweet Highland Mary."

Sitting in the sun, on a bench outside the gate-house, with his little granddaughter on his lap, was the white-haired gate-keeper. As the horses' heads turned toward the gate, he arose slowly, without a change of muscle, and set down the child, who accepted her altered situation also without a change of muscle in her sober little face.

"Is it allowed to go in?" asked the driver.

"Eh—ye'll not be calling at the hoos?" asked the old man, surprised.

"No, I'm a stranger; but I like to see all the fine places in your country," I replied.

"I've no orders," looking at the driver reflectively; "I've no orders—but—a decent parson"—looking again scrutinizingly at me,— "I think there can be no haim," and he opened the gate.

Grand trees, rolling tracts of velvety turf, an ugly huge house of weather-beaten stone, with white pillars in front; conservatories joining the wings to the centre; no attempt at decorative landscape art; grass, trees, distances,—these were all; but there were miles of these. It was at least a mile's drive to the other entrance to the estate, where the old stone gate-way house was in ruin. I fancy that it was better kept up in the days before

an Earl of Eglintoune sold it to a plain Mr. Patterson.

At another fine estate nearer Ayr, where an old woman was gate-keeper and also had "no orders" about admitting strangers, the magic word "America" threw open the gates with a sweep, and bent the old dame's knees in a courtesy which made her look three times as broad as she was long. This estate had been "always in the Oswald family, an' is likely always to be, please God," said the loyal creature, with another courtesy at the mention, unconsciously devout as that of the Catholic when he crosses himself. "An' it's a fine country ye've yersel' in America," she added, politely. The Oswald estate has acres of beautiful curving uplands, all green and smooth and open; a lack of woods near the house, but great banks of sunshine instead, make a beauty all their own; and the Ayr Water running through the grounds, and bridged gracefully here and there, is a possession to be coveted. From all points is a clear sight of sea, and headlands north and south,—Ayr harbour lying like a crescent, now silver, now gold, afloat between blue sky and green shore, and dusky gray roof-lines of the town.

The most precious thing in all the parish of Ayr is the cottage in which Burns was born. It is about two miles south from the centre of the town, on the shore of "Bonnie Doon," and near Alloway Kirk. You cannot go thither from Ayr over any road except the one Tam o' Shanter took: it has been straightened a little since his day, but many a rod of it is the same that Maggie trod; and Alloway Kirk is as ghostly a place now, even at high noon, as can be found "frae Maiden-kirk to Johnny Groat's." There is nothing left of it but the walls and the gable, in which the ancient bell still hangs, intensifying the silence by its suggestion of echoes long dead.

The Burns Cottage is now a sort of inn, kept by an Englishman whose fortunes would make a tale by themselves. He fought at Balaklava and in our civil war; and side by side on the walls of his dining-room hang, framed, his two commissions in the Pennsylvania Volunteers and the menu of the Balaklava Banquet, given in London to the brave fellows

that came home alive after that fight. He does not love the Scotch people.

"I would not give the Americans for all the Scotch ever born," he says, and is disposed to speak with unjust satire of their apparent love of Burns, which he ascribes to a perception of his recognition by the rest of the world and a shamefaced desire not to seem to be behind-hand in paying tribute to him.

"Oh, they let on to think much of him," he said. "It's money in their pockets."

The room in which Burns was born is still unaltered, except in having one more window let in. Originally, it had but one small square window of four panes. The bed is like the beds in all the old Scotch cottages, built into the wall, similar to those still seen in Norway. Stifling enough the air surely must have been in the cupboard bed in which the "waly boy" was born.

"The gossip keekit in his loof;  
Quo' scho, 'Wha lives will see the proof,—  
This waly boy will be nae coof;  
I think we'll ca' him Robin.'"

Before he was many days old, or, as some traditions have it, on the very night he was born, a violent storm "tirled" away part of the roof of the poor little "clay biggin," and mother and babe were forced to seek shelter in a neighbour's cottage. Misfortune and Robin early joined company and never parted. The little bedroom is now the show-room of the inn, and is filled with tables piled with the well-known boxes, pincushions, baskets, paper-cutters, etc., made from sycamore wood grown on the banks of Doon and Ayr. These articles are all stamped with some pictures of scenery associated with Burns or with quotations from his verses. It is impossible to see all this money-making without thinking what a delicious, rollicking bit of verse Burns would write about it himself if he came back to-day. There are those who offer for sale articles said to be made out of the old timbers of the Mossgiel house; but the Balaklava Englishman scouts all that as the most barefaced imposture. "There wasn't an inch of that timber," he says,—and he was there when the house was taken down—"which wasn't worm-eaten and rotten; not enough to make a knife-handle of!"

One feels disposed to pass over in silence

the "Burns Monument," which was built in 1820, at a cost of over three thousand pounds; "a circular temple supported by nine fluted Corinthian columns emblematic of the nine muses," say the guide-books. It stands in a garden overlooking the Doon, and is a painful sight. But in a room in the base of it are to be seen some relics at which no Burns lover can look unmoved: the Bibles he gave to Highland Mary, the ring with which he wedded Jean (taken off after her death), and two rings containing some of his hair.

It is but a few steps from this monument down to a spot on the "banks o' bonnie Doon," from which is a fine view of the "auld brig." This shining, silent water, and the overhanging, silent trees, and the silent bell in the gable of Alloway Kirk, speak more eloquently of Burns than do all nine of the Corinthian muse-dedicated pillars in his monument.

So do the twa brigs of Ayr, which still stand at the foot of High Street, silently re-terminating each other as of old.

"I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye'r nae sheep-shank  
When ye are streekit o'er frae bank to bank,"

sneers the Auld; and

"Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,  
Where twa wheelbarrows tremble when they meet,  
Your ruined, formless bulk o' stane and lime,  
Compare with bonny brigs o' modern time?"

retorts the New; and "the sprites that owe the brigs of Ayr preside" never interrupt the quarrel. Spite of all its boasting, however, the new bridge cracked badly two years ago, and had to be taken down and entirely rebuilt.

The dingy little inn where

"Tam was glorious,  
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious,"

is still called by his name, and still preserves, as its chief claims to distinction, the big wooden mug out of which Tam drank and the chair in which he so many market nights

"gat planted unco richt."

The chair is of oak, well-nigh black as ebony, and furrowed thick with names cut upon it. The smart young landlady who now keeps the house commented severely on this desecration of it, and said that for some years the house had been "keepit" by a widow, who was "in no sense up to the beesiness," and

"a' people did as they pleased in the hoos in her day." The mug has a metal rim and base, but spite of these it has needed to be clasped together again by three ribs of cane, riveted on. "Money couldn't buy it," the landlady said. It belongs to the house, is mentioned always in the terms of lease, and the house has changed hands but four times since Tam's day.

In a tiny stone cottage in the southern suburbs of Ayr live two nieces of Burns, daughters of his youngest sister Isabella. They are vivacious still, and eagerly alive to all that goes on in the world, though they must be well on in the seventies. The day I called they had "just received a newspaper from America," they said. "Perhaps I knew it. It was called 'The Democrat.'" As I was not able to identify it by that description, the younger sister made haste to fetch it. It proved to be a paper printed in Madison, Iowa. The old ladies were much interested in the approaching American election, had read all they could find about General Garfield, and were much impressed by the wise reticence of General Grant. "He must be a very cautious man; disna say enough to please people," they said, with sagacious nods of approbation. They remembered Burns's wife very well, had visited her when she was living, a widow, at Dumfries, and told with glee a story which they said she herself used to narrate, with great relish, of a peddler lad who, often coming to the house with wares to sell in the kitchen, finally expressed to the servant his deep desire to see Mrs. Burns. She accordingly told him to wait, and her mistress would no doubt before long come into the room. Mrs. Burns came in, stood for some moments talking with the lad, bought some trifle of him, and went away. Still he sat waiting. At last the servant asked why he did not go. He replied that she had promised he should see Mrs. Burns.

"But ye have seen her. That was she," said the servant.

"Eh, eh?" said the lad. "Na! never tell me now that was 'bonnie Jean!'"

Burns's mother, too, their grandmother, they recollected well, and had often heard her tell of the time when the family lived at Lochlea, and Robert, spending his evenings



at the Tarbolton merry-makings with the Bachelors' Club or the Masons, used to come home late in the night, and she used to sit up to let him in. These doings sorely displeased the father, and at last he said grimly, one night, that he would sit up to open the door for Robert. Trembling with fear, the mother went to bed and did not close her eyes, listening apprehensively for the angry meeting between father and son. She heard the door open, the old man's stern tone, Robert's gay reply, and in a twinkling more the two were sitting together over the fire, the father splitting his sides with half-unwilling laughter at the boy's inimitable descriptions and mimicry of the scenes he had left. Nearly two hours they sat there in this way, the mother all the while cramming the bed-clothes into her mouth, lest her own laughter should remind her husband how poorly he was carrying out his threats. After that night "Rob" came home at what hour he pleased, and there was nothing more heard of his father's sitting up to reprove him.

They believed that Burns's intemperate habits had been greatly exaggerated. His mother was a woman twenty-five years old and the mother of three children when he died, and she had never once seen him the "waur for liquor." "There were very many idle people i' the world, an' a great deal o' talk," they said. After his father's death, he assumed the position of the head of the house, and led in family prayers each morning, and everybody said, even the servants, that there were never such beautiful prayers heard. He was a generous soul. After he left home he never came back for a visit, however poor he might be, without bringing a present for every member of the family; always a pound of tea for his mother, "and tea was tea then," the old ladies added. To their mother he gave a copy of Thomson's "Seasons," which they still have. They have also some letters of his, two of which I read with great interest. They were to his brother and were full of good advice. In one he says:

"I intended to have given you a sheetful of counsels, but some business has prevented me. In a word, learn taciturnity. Let that be your motto. Though you had the wisdom of Newton or the wit of Swift, garrulousness would lower you in the eyes of your fellow-creatures."

In the other, after alluding to some village tragedy, in which great suffering had fallen on a woman, he says:

"Women have a kind of steady sufferance which qualifies them to endure much beyond the common run of men; but perhaps part of that fortitude is owing to their short-sightedness, as they are by no means famous for seeing remote consequences in their real importance."

The old ladies said that their mother had liked "Jean" on the whole, though "at first not so weel, on account of the connection being what it was." She was kindly, cheery, "never bonny;" but had a good figure, danced well and sang well, and worshipped her husband. She was "not intellectual;" "but there's some say a poet shouldn't have an intellectual wife," one of the ingenious old spinsters remarked, interrogatively. "At any rate, she suited him, an' it was ill speering at her after all that was said and done," the younger niece added, with real feeling in her tone. Well might she say so. If there be a touching picture in all the long list of faithful and ill-used women, it is that of "bonnie Jean"—the unwedded mother of children, the forgiving wife of a husband who betrayed others as he had betrayed her—when she took into her arms and nursed and cared for her husband's child, born of an outcast woman, and bravely answered all curious questioners with, "It's a neebor's bairn I'm bringin' up." She wrought for herself a place and an esteem of which her honest and loving humility little dreamed.

There is always something sad in seeking out the spot where a great man has died. It is like living over the days of his death and burial. The more sympathetically we have felt the spell of the scenes in which he lived his life, the more vitalized and vitalizing that life was, the more are we chilled and depressed in the presence of places on which his wearied and suffering gaze rested last. As I drove through the dingy, confused, and ugly streets of Dumfries, my chief thought was, "How Burns must have hated this place!" Looking back on it now, I have a half regret that I ever saw it, that I can recall vividly the ghastly grave-yard of St Michael's, with its twenty-six thousand grave-stones and monuments, crowded closer than they would be in a marble-yard, ranged in rows against the



walls without any pretence of association with the dust they affect to commemorate. What a ballad Burns might have written about such a show! And what would it not have been given to him to say of the "Genius of Coila finding her favourite son at the plough, and casting her mantle over him," *i.e.*, the sculptured monument, or, as the sexton called it, "Máwsolem," under which he has had the misfortune to be buried. A great Malvern bath-woman, bringing a bathing-sheet to an unwilling patient, might have been the model for the thing. It is hideous beyond description, and in a refinement of ingenuity has been made uglier still by having the spaces between the pillars filled in with glass. The severe Scotch weather, it seems, was discolouring the marble. It is a pity that the zealous guardians of its beauty did not hold it precious enough to be boarded up altogether.

The house in which Burns spent the first eighteen months of his dreary life in Dumfries is now a common tenement-house at the lower end of a poor and narrow street. As I was reading the tablet let into the wall, bearing his name, a carpenter went by, carrying his box of tools slung on his shoulder.

"He only had three rooms there," said the man, "those three up there," pointing to the windows; "two rooms and a little kitchen at the back."

The house which is usually shown to strangers as his is now the home of the master of the industrial school, and is a comfortable little building joining the school. Here Burns lived for three years; and here, in a small chamber not more than twelve by fifteen feet in size, he died on the 21st of July, 1796, sadly harassed in his last moments by anxiety about money matters and about the approaching illness of his faithful Jean.

Opening from this room is a tiny closet lighted by one window.

"They say he used to make up his poetry in here," said the servant-girl; "but I dare say it is only a supposition; still, it 'ud be a quiet place."

"They say there was a great lot o' papers up here when he died," she added, throwing

open the narrow door of a ladder-like stairway that led up into the garret, "writin's that had been sent to him from all over the world, but nobody knew what become of them. Now that he's so much thought aboot, I wonder his widow did not keep them. But, ye know, the poor thing was just comin' to be ill; that was the last thing he wrote when he knew he was dyin', for some one to come and stay with her; and I dare say she was in such a sewither she did not know about anything."

The old stone stairs were winding and narrow—painted now, and neatly carpeted, but worn into depressions here and there by the plodding of feet. Nothing in the house, above or below, spoke to me of Burns so much as did they. I stood silent and rapt on the landing, and saw him coming wearily up, that last time; after which he went no more out forever, till he was borne in the arms of men, and laid away in St. Michael's graveyard to rest.

That night, at my lonely dinner in the King's Arms, I had the Edinburgh papers. There were in them three editorials headed with quotations from Burns's poems, and an account of the sale in Edinburgh, that week, of an autograph letter of his for ninety-four pounds!

Does he think sadly, even in heaven, how differently he might have done by himself and by Earth, if Earth had done for him then a tithe of what it does now? Does he know it? Does he care? And does he listen when, in lands he never saw, great poets sing of him in words simple and melodious as his own?

"For now he haunts his native land  
As an immortal youth : his hand  
Guides every plough ;  
He sits beside each ingle-nook,  
His voice is in each rushing brook,  
Each rustling bough.

"His presence haunts this room to-night,  
A form of mingled mist and light  
From that far coast.  
Welcome beneath this roof of mine !  
Welcome ! this vacant chair is thine,  
Dear guest and ghost !" \*

\* Longfellow.

## XXII.—MR. ROBERT FORD ON BURNS.

*From an Address delivered before the Barlinnie Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.*

THE first meeting of the Barlinnie Burns Club was held in the Officers' Recreation Hall, on the 25th January, 1893, when about fifty of the members and officers sat down to partake of the good things provided, after which the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were pledged.

Mr. ROBERT FORD, the well-known author of "Thistledown," "Humorous Scotch Readings," "The Harp of Perthshire," etc., on rising to give the toast of the evening, said—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—In rising here, at what is practically the first meeting of the Barlinnie Burns Club, to propose the toast of "The Immortal Memory" of the Bard whose genius is being honoured to-night in every land where the wandering Scot has found a home—and where has he not?—I do so at once with the proud consciousness of the importance of the duty which you have laid upon me, and a humiliating sense of my inability to do anything like honour to the occasion. This meeting has been hurriedly got up, and even such poor thoughts as I have on the subject have had to be hastily thrown together. What I am able to say now, therefore, may not be so pungent, and may lack the ornateness which, with more leisure, I, even I, might be able to give to it; but I will claim this for what is to follow, that it will all be spoken in love; that it will be the genuine utterance of one who has been an ardent worshipper at the shrine of his genius—who has learned much from him—much of the world, and much of his own heart—and who yields to no man in admiration for the quality of his great human heart, and the liquid melody and power of his song-gift.

We claim for Burns, Sir, a place among the chosen few who are at once national and universal, moving with absolute mastery the hearts of their countrymen, yet no less touching the whole heart of man. We place him in the very front rank of the immortals—cheek for jowl with Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe. These were all severally the outcome, not of a special culture merely,

nor of a passing time, but of a nation's life, of whose growth they are the perfect flower. Not every national poet is also catholic. The bagpipe, as one has finely put it, stirs the heart of the Gael as it sounds a pibroch in Lochaber or Lochiel, but it needs a Celtic ear thoroughly to relish its drone and chanter. It hardly discourses the Orphic music that takes captive all the world. So, too, there are poets that move their own countrymen to tears or laughter as they will, and who yet do not rank in this little group of world-poets. France, keen and trenchant as its mind is, is not represented there, nor is Spain with all its wealth of rich and subtle thought. But Robert Burns, even although he framed his song in the dialect speech peculiar to our own little land, takes his seat among the choice of the chosen. He has not, indeed, written an "Illiad," a "Hamlet," a "Divina Comedia," or a "Faust,"—he had not the opportunity in that brief, stormy life of his—possibly he had not even the power; I do not say he was a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Dante, or a Goethe, or that he could ever have done what they did, but, on the other hand, he has done what they did not—he has sung songs that have captivated the common heart of humanity, and so has won a place for himself in universal estimation which might be coveted by the best of them. As sure as there is only one Shakespeare, there is only one Burns—he cannot be repeated—and it is the proud boast of Scotland (his "ancient mither" as he loved to call her) that he was her son. It is this same pride—the glory of being able to call him a brither Scot—which brings us together to-night, to sing his songs, to recite his poems, to drop a tear of pity over his untimely fate, to lament his backslidings, but, above all, to emphasize his many virtues, and to thank the Giver of all for the dower of his genius by which he has shed so much light and love and life on the paths of struggling humanity.

Of the individual incidents in Burns's career it is not my purpose here to remind you. His life is a familiar story to the most of us,

and much of his brief history is not very pleasant reading. But, if Burns sinned—and he did sin—he suffered severely for it; yea, he sinned egregiously, but never did sinful man repent more bitterly. If he sometimes rejoiced in the heaven of folly at night he languished in the hell of remorse the next day for it. This shows that he was normally sound of heart; that although a *sinning* man he was not a *bad* man—your inveterate sinner knows no repentance. In the main, Robert Burns was a very good man—he meant well. Thus it was he was able to say to a youthful friend—

“The gentle lowe o’ well-placed love  
Luxuriantly indulge it,  
But never tempt the illicit rove,  
Though fate should ne’er divulge it.  
I waive the quantum o’ the sin,  
The hazard o’ concealing;  
But oh! it hardens a’ within,  
And petrifies the feeling.”

It was thus he was able to say—

“When ranting round in pleasure’s ring  
Religion may be blinded;  
Or if she gi’e a random sting  
It may be little minded;  
But when on life we’re tempest driven,  
A conscience but a canker,  
A correspondence fix’d wi’ Heaven  
Is sure a noble anchor.”

His life as a *man*, perhaps was not a great success; but as Carlyle graphically puts it—“Granted that the ship comes into the harbour with her masts broken and her sails torn, before you pronounce judgment on the captain ask whether he sailed round the Horn or came in through the Isle of Dogs.” Gentlemen, Burns came through the Isle of Dogs. This said, I will make no more mention of his faults and failings. I have referred to them only because there is a class of people in the world who, with ghoulish taste, are ever prone to remind us of the wicked things which he did, and who cannot see the sun for the spots that are on it—who refuse the rose because it grew beside a thorn. You may tell them that David the Psalmist has been appointed to a place among the saints of Holy Writ, not on account of his vices, but his virtues; yet they will not yield the same toleration to Robert Burns.

They know nothing of the charity which covereth a multitude of sins. But enough!

What of Burns? What of the breadth of his humanity? What of the wealth of his genius? At the age of nineteen the Muse found him at the plough, and threw her mantle over him, and his mission was clear to him from that hour. He set himself at once to depict life as he found it existing around him—the common life of the common people—with all its joys, all its sorrows, all its frailties, all its virtues; and here is the secret of his power as a poet. He has not dosed us with moral platitudes, like Pope and others of the artificial school. He has looked at everything around him from a common standpoint, and has set the world’s heart singing what it has fancied to be its *own* song and not *his*.

We have all felt, I am sure, when reading Burns for the first time that he was often telling us what had previously occurred to our own mind in a ruder way. But this so-called common power, like common sense—which is *exceptional* sense—is the rarest power of all. It is the power which makes the great painter, the great musician, and the great poet; the power to hold the mirror up to Nature, to show virtue her own sweet face, and to reveal hypocrisy and shame in all their barren hideousness. We have all felt, even as Burns did, that

“’Tis hardly in a body’s power  
To keep at times frae bein’ sour,  
To see how things are shared;  
That best o’ chields are whiles in want,  
While coofs on countless thousands rant,  
And ken na how to ware’t.”

But the thought only smouldered in our breast until he touched it with the torch of his lyrical genius and it became a flame. Mrs. McCuistan, the old domestic at Dunlop House, referring to “The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” told her mistress—Mrs. Dunlop, the good friend of Burns—that she “didna see anything in the poem for the folks to mak’ a wark about. Nae doot you gentles think it grand, but it’s naething but what I have seen in my ain faither’s hoose a hunder times.” What a fine compliment! Some have said that the “Cottar’s Saturday Night” is Burns’s greatest poem. Carlyle preferred the wild abandon of “The Jolly Beggars.” Burns himself considered “Tam O’Shanter” to be his masterpiece, and upon the whole I think



he was right. It stands alone in literature, thoroughly original, profoundly picturesque, exquisitely grand—a work possible only to the most powerful imagination. It was written in the single white heat of an exalted inspiration, and is, next to the battle of Bannockburn, perhaps the best day's work that was ever performed in Scotland.

But I must not weary you with any lengthened reference to his poems, because, rich and rare as these are, to my thinking the finer fruits of his genius are to be found elsewhere. Burns was above everything else a lyric poet—a singer of songs. It is through the melody, the power, and beauty of his songs that he has found the warm place he occupies in the heart of mankind, and because his songs give voice to the loves and aspirations of common men. Get over the difficulties of the language in which it is written, and "Auld Lang Syne" is the song of all men, no matter where they were born and bred. Every man has had a youth that is rosy in the memory of his mature life—he has "paddled in the burn" and "run about the braes" with some one he loved, and

"Seas between them braid ha'e rowed,  
Sin' Auld Lang Syne."

In every village in the world has lived a "Duncan Gray," over whose courtship the inhabitants might sing,

"Ha, ha, the wooin' o't."

We have all had a "Mary Morrison;" some of us have a "Mary in Heaven" to whom we would cry in the impassioned words of the poet—

"O Mary, dear, departed shade,  
Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?

Hear'st thou the pangs that rend his breast?"

"John Anderson my jo" is the golden wedding song of every happy old couple. "A man's a man for a' that" has afforded a social creed to common humanity.

But we have not time to refer to his songs individually—only to those to which we have already referred let us add, "Afton Water," "Ae Fond Kiss," "Last May a braw wooer," "My Nannie's awa'," "Tam Glen," "Scots

wha ha'e," "O' a' the airts the wind can blaw," "Rantin' Robin," "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon," and then we may ask where is the other single writer to whom you can credit so many songs that have a world-wide fame? These songs are not confined to Scotland or to Britain; they are sung in every land, and are as familiar and enthusiastically welcome among the Rocky Mountains as among the streams and lakes of their native Ayrshire—among the burningsands of Arabia, and under the Southern Cross of Australia, as among the heather bloom and green bracken of Auld Caledonia.

It is for his service to Scotland in the matter of songs that we specially delight to honour him. It was he, more than all else put together, who made Scottish song the glorious thing that it is. Prior to Burns's appearance on the stage of human existence what was the condition, Sir, of our national minstrelsy? We had a popular song book polluted on every page. Such of the popular songs of the time—if you except a dozen or so, "The Flowers o' the Forest," "Auld Robin Gray," "Nae luck about the hoose," "Logie o' Buchan," "Johnnie Cope," "Maggie Lauder," and "Down the burn, Davie," and one or two more—such of them, I say, with these few exceptions, as were not tainted with vulgarity and vile innuendo, were the most puerile and feckless doggerel. Burns set himself to purify these old songs, and gave us a song book which is like a human psalter by comparison. It is when we take up Ramsay's "Evergreen" and the "Tea-Table Miscellany," or Herd's collection of old songs and ballads, and look at the originals of "Dainty Davie," "She rose and loot me in," and "John Anderson my jo," and some more, that we discover the noble—the God's work—which he performed.

It is for the purification of these old songs, and for the hundred and more original gems which he added to our song book, that we regard Robert Burns as a gift from the gods. It is for this that we can overlook so many of his faults and failings. It is for this that we delight to honour his memory—for this we are "a' sae prood o' Robin."



## XXIII.—BURNS—AN ANNIVERSARY RHYME.

*By ALEX. SCRIMGEOUR, AMHERST, N. S.*

WHEN Scotch fouk meet in ony lan',  
 At this time o' the year,  
 To spend a canty oor at e'en  
 Wi' mirth an' social cheer.

To lilt sweet sangs, tell aft-auld tales  
 (That auld an' young enjoy),  
 O' Wallace brave an' sturdy Bruce,  
 O' Douglas or Rob Roy—

They'll aye be sure to bring to min'  
 The bard o' the "Land o' Cakes,"  
 Wha's name the onward flicht o' time  
 But dearer ever makes.

Near Alloway's auld haunted kirk  
 In seventeen fifty-nine,  
 Was born that pawky, ploughman chiel  
 Wha spak' his thochts in rhyme.

The Januar wind did whistle cauld  
 When first he saw the day,  
 In the humble hame o' a cottar puir,  
 A biggin o' straw and clay.

But what o' that? his humble lot  
 (Tho' poverty ye'll ca' that),  
 He ne'er despised but bauldly sang,  
 "A man's a man for a' that."

An' a man was he, aye a king o' men,  
 Wi' a heart sae large an' free  
 As wad brithers mak' o' a' mankind  
 An' hae them a' to gree.

But ready he, wi' tongue an' pen,  
 To tear awa' the mask  
 Frae hypocrites an' cantin' rogues,  
 An' bring them weel to task.

An' he had fauts, (for wha has no'?)  
 Fauts that were deep an' strang,

Which marred his joys, embittered griefs,  
 And dimmed his gift o' sang.

But judge na' harshly, weigh his sins  
 By the standard o' the times—  
 No by the higher one which now  
 Tries all our deeds an' lines.

Find no excuse for follies caused  
 By Scotia's curse, or lovely woman,  
 Condemn a' vice wherever fand,  
 But mind, "to err is human."

A reverence deep had he for Him  
 Wha rules the winds an' waves,  
 An' ne'er lost faith in Him wha still  
 The guilty sinner saves.

Deep love o' nature filled his mind  
 An' fand its vent in sang  
 Till cot an' palace, hill an' dale,  
 Wi' his sweet measures rang.

An' wha like him can sing sae weel  
 O' love's warm tender flames,  
 Which crown our life wi' bliss an' joy  
 An' fill wi' peace our hames?

An' fondly still his lines are read  
 Owre a' the earth where Scotchmen dwell,  
 An' strangers, too, have owned their worth—  
 Have felt their power, and loved them well.

Tall monuments lift up their heads  
 To herald forth his fame;  
 An' high in place 'twill aye be fand  
 Upon the scroll of fame.

But 'tis memorial better far  
 Than sculptured shafts or storied urns,  
 That deep in the world's great living heart  
 Is wrote the name of Burns.

## XXIV.—A COLLECTION OF BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.

*BY G. A. AITKEN.*

FROM THE "GLASGOW HERALD."

IN 1861, when autograph songs by Robert Burns could be bought for a guinea, and it was, therefore, not worth forging them, a

remarkable collection of eighty Burns manuscripts was sold by Messrs Puttick and Simpson, the well-known auctioneers in London.

The sale was on the 2nd of May, and soon afterwards the portion of the catalogue relating to the Burns papers was privately printed in separate pamphlet form by the compiler, Mr. E. C. Bignmore, under the title, "Descriptive List of a Collection of Original Manuscript Poems by Robert Burns." Twenty-five copies were struck off, and it was only recently that I became aware of the existence of this little book. None of Burns's editors seem to have known it, and, though it is useless to attempt, after so long a time, to trace the papers, which were for the most part bought by London booksellers, an account of them will, I think, be found interesting to admirers of the Poet, and may lead to the present owners of some of the manuscripts making known where they are now to be found. I shall confine my remarks chiefly to pieces which are not to be found in Burns's works, in the hope that the lines given in the catalogue may enable students of old Scotch poetry to identify them, and thus show whether or not it is probable that they were of Burns's own composition. It is, of course, well known that Burns often copied out old verses, and the existence of lines in his writing does not, therefore, in itself afford proof of authorship. The references below are to my edition of Burns's poems published last year by Messrs Bell & Sons.

One of the first pieces mentioned is "The Hue and Cry of John Lewars, a poor man ruined and undone by robbery and murder, being an awful warning to the young men of this age how they look well to themselves in this dangerous, terrible world." This is a complaint, in four four-line verses, of Lewar's heart being stolen by Miss Woods, governess at Miss M'Murdo's boarding-school, and begins, "A thief and a murderer, stop her who can!" From the personages mentioned, there can be little or no doubt that these lines are by Burns, and it would be interesting if they could be recovered. Another piece, obviously Burns's, is "To Captain Gordon, on being asked why I was not to be of the party with him and his brother Kenmure at Syme's," which begins "Dost ask, dear Captain, why from Syme," and, after comparing some of his own abilities (?) with Syme's, concludes (according to the catalogue)—

"Yet must I still the sort deplore  
That to my griefs adds one more,  
In balking me the social hour  
With you and noble Kenmure."

Some such word as "yet" seems to be needed after "adds" in the second line. Next comes "A Sonnet on Sonnets," beginning "Fourteen, a Sonneteer thy praises sings," and ending—

"But brockie played, boo! to bawsie,  
And aff gaed the cowte like the win';  
Poor Wattie he fell in the cawsie,  
And birs'd a' the bones in his skin;  
The pistols fell out o' the hulsters,  
And were a' bedaubed wi' dirt;  
The folk ran about him in clusters,  
Some leugh and cry'd, 'lad, are ye hurt?'"

Soon afterwards we find a copy of "The auld man's mare's dead," which is given in Johnson's "Scots Musical Museum," v. 500, without indication of its authorship. It will also be found in Chambers's "Songs of Scotland before Burns," 141. There is, too, a single verse and chorus of "Where hae ye been so braw, lass," which I have not traced elsewhere; and a verse of four lines beginning "When heavy and slow move the dark days of sorrow and care." We find, also, a copy of the ballad, "There lived a man down in yon glen," which is printed by Johnson, iv. 376. A fragment of "Now westlin winds" (Poems, i. 42) is interesting, chiefly because of the variation in the last line; the catalogue states that the "Jeanie Armour" is in short-hand:—

"Now breezy win's and slaughtering guns,  
Bright autumn's pleasant weather,  
And the muir-cock springs on whirling wings  
Among the blooming heather.  
Now waving crops, with yellow tops,  
Delight the weary farmer,  
An' the moon shines bright when I roam at night  
To muse on Jeanie Armour."

"What lucubrations can be made upon it?  
Fourteen good measured verses make a sonnet."

Another MS. containing a song, in eight verses, "Here are we, loyal Natives," and two other songs. Another paper had "Broom besoms, a song," beginning "I maun hae a wife, whatsoe'er she be," with three more verses to the same tune. Mr. M'Naught, the editor of the "Burns Chronicle," tells me that he heard verses, of which he remembers only

the following, sung years ago, but that he never saw them in print : whether they form a portion of the same song is uncertain :—

“ Fine broom besoms,  
Besoms fine and new,  
Besoms for a penny,  
Reenglers for a plack ;  
Gin ye dinna want them  
Tie them on my back.”

We then come to a fragment of the “*Pasion's Cry*” (Poems, Vol. II., pp. 234-6), or “*Sappho Rediva*,” as Douglas called it, which includes the lines first printed by Dr. Waddell, and ends in accordance with the MS. in the Edinburgh University Library, which I quoted in a note. The next piece which is unfinished, is very different. It consists of 32 lines, descriptive of a fair, and begins “*Sae mony braw Jockies and Jennies.*” The following lines are quoted :—

“ And Wattie, the mairland laddie,  
Was mounted upon a grey cowte,  
Wi' sword at his side like a cadie,  
To drive in the sheep and the nowte.  
His doubtlet, sae weel did it fit him,  
It scarcely cam' down to mid-thie ;  
Wi' hair powder'd bonnet and feather,  
And housin at curpon and tee.”

A portion (seventeen lines) of a Dedication, beginning “*Sir, think not with a mercenary view,*” is unpublished. So, too, is an Elegy, “*Craigdarroch, fam'd for speaking art,*” in four verses, of which the last is as follows :—

“ Go to your Marble Gaffs ! ye Great !  
In a' the tinkler-trash o' State !  
But by the honest turf I'll wait,  
Thou Man of Worth,  
And weep the ae best fellow's fate  
E'er lay in earth.”

A version of “*Fintry, my stay in worldly strife,*” is described as a first sketch, with four unpublished verses ; but they are not quoted, and are probably included in the poem as now published (Poems, II., 322). There were also a draft of the “*Monody on a lady famed for her caprice*” (III., 169), without the fifth verse, and with many variations from the printed text ; the first five verses of “*The Whistle*” (II., 294), with variations ; and two versions of the first two verses of “*Sing on, sweet songster*” (III., 232). In a copy of the “*Occasional Address spoken by Miss Fontenelle*” (III., 158), the following lines were marked for omission :—

“ ‘ O Ma'am,' replied the silly strutting creature,  
Screwing each self-important awkward feature,  
' Flatt'ry I hate, as I admire your taste,  
At once so just, correct, profound, and chaste.' ”

A copy of “*The Five Carlins*” (II., 305), was sent to Mr. David Blair, gunmaker, Birmingham, with these lines :—“*I send you this foolish ballad—I have not yet forgiven Fortune for her mischievous game of cross-purposes that deprived me of the pleasure of seeing you again when you were here. Adieu ! R. BURNS.*”

A portion of “*The Brigs of Ayr*” (beginning “*'Twas when the stacks got on their winter hap*”) is described as containing seven unpublished lines ; and on the fourth page of the MS. was a draft of the dedicatory letter to Ballantyne. The copy of the “*Prologue spoken by Mr. Woods*” (II., 117), had four lines not printed. A first sketch of “*The Jolly Beggars*” had “*Luckie Nansie*” instead of “*Poosie Nansie*” (I., 157, 120), and the following interesting note by Burns :—“*Luckie Nansie is Racer Jess's mother in my Holy Fair. Luckie kept a kind of caravansery for the lower order of wayfaring strangers and pilgrims.*”

In a copy of the first two verses of “*No Spartan tribe*” (III., 180), “*Hibernia*” appears instead of “*Columbia* ;” and the “*Prologue spoken at Dumfries, 1790*” (II., 310), had two additional lines. In a copy of “*The Posie*” (III., 32), each verse had as a refrain its last two lines. The song “*O wat ye wha that lo'es me*” (III., 264), appears without the third verse, and with variations ; and there were only two verses of “*She says she lo'es me best of all*” (III., 188). The third verse was wanting in “*Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair*” (III., 208).

Among the other manuscripts at this sale was Burns's Common-Place Book, April, 1783, consisting of 43 folio pages ; and “*Scotch Poems by Robert Burness,*” 59 pages, an autograph collection of very important pieces. Others I have not mentioned because they are to be found in the printed poems ; but the whole catalogue of 24 pages might well be reprinted by one of the Burns clubs, in which case the prices obtained for the MSS. should be added from the copy of the auctioneer's catalogue in the Newspaper-

Room at the British Museum. We can only wish that Mr. Bigmore had been more liberal of quotation when referring to unpublished lines, and hope that the notice now drawn to

the matter will lead to the discovery and publication of some of the manuscripts dispersed so long ago.

## XXV.—BURNS: AN ODE.

BY ALEXANDER ANDERSON.

*Read at the unveiling of the Dumfries Statue of the Bard, April 6th, 1882.*

The gods had temples, for there is in man  
An all-compelling power to shape in stone  
His greater, higher brother, to atone  
For shame and insult when alone he ran  
The thorny pathway, wearing on  
His brow an unseen crown  
That bore its wearer down  
Until he sank and, like a sun, was gone.

And he, our singer, who behind his plough  
Walk'd, while song-splendours born in fire  
above  
Fell down like golden rain upon his brow,  
And touch'd his heart to one great bloom  
of love ;

Who, lowly, having no high vantage ground,  
Half-turn'd him from the plough in humble  
guise,  
And flung around him that bewitching sound,  
As if from larks unseen within the skies,  
Until its music, like a living thing,  
Grew wing'd, and with a universal coil  
Took in its folds the hearts of peer and king,  
Yet led in unresisting triumph toil

Until its rugged sons rose up, and said :—  
“ He speaks for all, but seems for us, alone :  
We bless the singer ; lay hands upon his head,  
Who shapes this music which we claim our  
own.”

His was the fight with glooms and wild  
despairs,

The civil war within which none may see ;  
The fading hopes, the daily growing cares,  
The forward look into the dim to Be.

Ah me, we did him slow and willing wrong,  
Because we knew him not. And now,  
When death and Fame around his  
brow

Have woven, what our eyes may see,  
The wreath of immortality,

We know him ; and though all too late,  
With hearts compassionate,  
We give the ages as they roll along  
This statue of our greatest King of Song.

Ours is the shame of passing by  
This singer with the flashing eye,  
Whose grand quick soul that beat within his  
breast

True to high aims, but as the needle shakes  
To many points, so his in that unrest  
Which coils itself around great minds, and  
takes

The edge from high endeavours till they sink  
Like angels, driven from serener air,  
Fell, but in falling stood upon the brink  
With light that made a nimbus of despair,  
Which glowing round his laurel'd head  
Made sunshine for his downward tread,  
As, with the swan-song on his lips,  
He pass'd into the last eclipse,  
Leaving his great full heart behind,  
To throb for ever with his kind.

Nay, but we did his high great spirit wrong.  
He cannot feel it ; for he sees aright  
In that grand burst of other world light  
That now has made the weak within him  
strong.

He hears the voice of Dante rise  
In ever higher harmonies ;  
And Shakespeare making in high bliss  
Another summer where he is ;  
Milton with unseal'd vision calm  
Amid his own grand organ psalm ;  
And Homer sending one wild roll  
And clash of battle through the whole.  
They hear him, and he hears them, too,  
For pain and suffering in song  
Is brotherhood among the strong,  
And links with bands of steel the few.



They bend and whisper (for they know  
 In that high land all tongues of speech)  
 "Here is a brother down below  
 Who almost stands within our reach.  
 What though our ear can catch a note  
 That jars the else perfect melody,  
 It is some string the world has smote  
 As heedlessly it thunder'd by.  
 Ours be the task to heal and place  
 This brother with his singing race."  
 Ours is the shame of having done him wrong ;  
 He suffer'd and went down,  
 Yet stumbling, caught the crown :  
 His is the glory, ours his endless song.

Ah, could we reach him where he stands  
 In that clear, pitying light of death ;  
 Nay, touch him with our reverent hands,  
 And whisper with a faltering breath  
 The praise of all who felt his song  
 Bring tears or strike and make them strong.  
 Of one\* who tower'd above the rest,  
 (Alas the earth is on his breast) ;  
 He came from lone, grey wilds, from which  
 He tore the fashion of his speech,  
 Bearing upon his lips like John  
 A burning gospel of his own,  
 And brought to nineteenth century men  
 A message from the wilds again.  
 He, pausing in the battle's din,  
 And with a softer light within  
 The misty dreamland of his eye  
 Paid worship to thy melody.  
 O think of praise from him, and bless  
 The gift of heaven that brought thee this !  
 Vain dream ! we mortals cry in vain  
 To the Immortals, though we feel  
 The pain they felt, they still remain  
 Serene in that high world of theirs,  
 And will not hearken to our prayers,  
 Nor for a moment will reveal  
 To daily deafen'd mortal ear  
 One echo of the sounds they hear.

His is the glory, ours his endless song,  
 For he has flung a light on wood and field  
 Which doth not to the daily sky belong,  
 Nor anything this earth of ours can yield.  
 It mingles with each breath of air  
 That sways the leaves by "Bonnie Doon,"

\* Thomas Carlyle.

It makes more bright the summer there,  
 And adds a glory to its June.  
 Ayr takes a music—not its own—  
 And sings through woods and fields that  
 smile,

Then sighs, and takes a sweeter tone  
 Within the haunts of Ballochmyle.  
 A greener glory crowns the grass  
 That waves to-day around Mossgiel,  
 For there his footsteps once did pass  
 And now for ever seem to feel  
 The touch that made them sacred. There  
 The certain sense of song has stirr'd  
 And, glowing through the sweeter air,  
 Can only be in silence heard.  
 Nith takes a higher gleam, and glides  
 Through waving meadows sweet to see ;  
 And Afton adds its mimic tides  
 To swell that spirit melody,  
 Until the fair Queen of the South  
 Reclining 'mid her wool and hill  
 Receives from her dead Master's mouth  
 Those tones that wake and tremble still  
 In songs that take no touch of gloom,  
 Though almost sung within the tomb.  
 For who can hear and say he marks  
 A threnody within the lark's ?  
 And his, the Master's, as he sung  
 Amid the falling shades were flung  
 As light as thistle-down to bear  
 Their music through the gracious air,  
 The while he felt his failing breath  
 Grow short beneath the shaft of death.

What is it that transforms each spot  
 Where once the master's footsteps trod  
 Into the temple of a god  
 Still burning with his life and thought ?  
 We know not : we can only guess  
 That down from other, purer skys,  
 Has come in silent solemnness  
 The haunting sense that deifies.  
 We know not what it is so sweet and fair  
 We only know that it is there.

Away, then, with those clouds that crown  
 The stony forehead of the town.  
 We see them not—the light he shed  
 Has made a sunshine overhead  
 That tips with gold the darkness where  
 What we had thought was grim despair

Is but the mantle of his song,  
 His singing raiment, folded wrong.  
 We see him only in that light  
 When all men seem to look aright,  
 We see him thus, and, as we look,  
 We turn away and cannot brook  
 The splendour, and the light which streams  
 As from a summer noonday's beams  
 From that high brow and glowing eye  
 Whose depths is liquid melody.  
 We turn away and only hear  
 The world's loud whisper fill our ear,  
 Which may perchance rise unto him  
 In that high land where earth grows dim,  
 And where those echoes which are ours  
 Can only touch with wasted powers  
 The shores of that eternity  
 Where all our choicest singers be.  
 Will he too hear them? Idle thought.  
 We ask, but we can answer not.  
 We only know the world to-day  
 Has flung its downward look away,  
 And at the magic of his name  
 Has risen with million-tongued acclaim  
 To press its toiling brow against the feet  
 Of him who sang, and singing sang so sweet,  
 Left unto this and all the coming years,  
 A legacy of smiles and tears.

Queen of the South, who hast our Singer's  
 dust  
 Beneath that dome where, by the plough, he  
 stands,  
 The Muse above him with the laurel wreath  
 Forever crowning him—another trust  
 Is given thee to-day, for lo, between  
 The Poet and his Song the sculptor stands  
 Moulding with loving hand and reverent  
 touch

The shape of him in marble. Meet it is  
 That this last tribute to our singing King  
 Should come from her who, having in her  
 heart  
 That large perfection for his witching song  
 Yet, being woman, sees him as we do,  
 Without one hint to darken with a spot  
 The fame that circles him. Not thine to  
 mourn  
 Like that fair Florence by the Arno where  
 Italia, like a childless mother, weeps  
 Above the dust of all her mightiest sons,  
 But not her greatest singer. Though he  
 stands,  
 Before and in that Santa Croce still,  
 Sublimely simple and severely stern,  
 A narrow wreath about his brow, and at  
 His feet the eagle of his cleaving song,  
 He sleeps, the world's lone Dante far away,  
 And Florence cannot gather to her heart  
 The ashes of her exiled son. But thou  
 Who hast the dust of him we crown to-day  
 Rejoice, and guard amid the streets, where  
 once  
 He trod, crown'd with the laurel, and beneath  
 Its folds the cyprus wreath of early death,  
 This shape of him we love. The coming  
 years,  
 First waves in all the centuries to be,  
 Can bring to thee no greater fame than this:  
 The dust thou claspest to thy breast, that  
 dust  
 Once throbbing with such fiery life, and this,  
 Wrought by the touch of woman's tender  
 hands  
 Into the breathless marble of himself.  
 To stand forever and to be to all  
 The fair white Memnon of our country's  
 Song.

## XXVI.—BURNS AND BLAIR: WITH A NOTE ON BEATTIE.

THE name of Robert Blair is associated in English literary history with a gloomy and powerful poem, "The Grave," which had an immense popularity, especially in Scotland, all through the latter half of last century. It was hardly eclipsed even by Young's "Night Thoughts"—if one may speak of gloom eclipsing gloom. Southey referred to it as

the most meritorious of all poems written in imitation of the "Night Thoughts;" but Southey does injustice to the genius of Blair, for "The Grave" was composed before the publication of Young's gloomy masterpiece, though it was not printed till 1743. It was written before its author's appointment as minister to the parish of Athelstaneford, in

Haddingtonshire, and when Blair was still a young man between twenty and thirty. A well known line of Campbell's—"Like angels' visits, few and far between"—it may not be generally known, was lifted from Blair, who refers to good impulses returning in an evil life "in visits like those of angels, short and far between." But a greater than Campbell was indebted, and indebted to a greater extent, for both turn of phrase and general tenor of reflection, to the author of "The Grave." Burns was a close and earnest student of this powerfully suggestive poem. Both his correspondence and his poems bear the clearest evidence, direct and indirect. The passage—

Tell us, ye dead ! will none of you in pity  
To those you left behind disclose the secret ?  
Oh, that some courteous ghost would blab it out,  
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be ?

must have been often on his lips, and was often transcribed by his pen. As well known to him, and as often quoted, was another passage from "The Grave" of some thirty lines, commencing—

Friendship ! mysterious cement of the soul !  
Sweetness of life, and solder of society !  
I owe thee much : thou hast deserved of me  
Far far beyond what I can ever pay.

But the greatest honour that can be attributed to the passage lies in the undoubted fact that, along with a scarcely remembered lyric of Thomson's, it suggested much of the imagery and sentiment of Burns's unutterably rich and tender hymns on Highland Mary. Blair represents himself and his "friend" as "wandering heedless on" in the ample security of a thick wood ; the lovers rest on a flowery bank beside a stream that murmurs sweetly through the underwood ; the thrush in their hearing renews and "mends his song of love ;" the fragrance of wild rose and eglantine exhales around them—

O, then the longest summer's day  
Seemed too too much in haste ; still the full heart  
Had not imparted half.

"To Mary in Heaven," like the companion verses on "Highland Mary," contains the same imagery of woodland and water, birds and flowers, the same situation of lovers fain, the same sentiments of affection, the same

sad reflections afterwards to be noted. The lovers meet by the winding Ayr that gurgled and kissed its pebbly shore, half-hidden in an underwood of birch and blooming thorn—

The flowers sprang wanton to be press'd,  
The birds sang love on every spray :  
Till too too soon the glowing west  
Proclaim'd the speed of wing'd day.

To both poets their memories are for ever sad and for ever sacred by reason of the death of the loved one. Blair's reflections are thus expressed—

Dull Grave ! thou spoil'st the dance of youthful blood,  
Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of mirth,  
And every feature from the face.

The beloved dead is "dumb as the green-covering turf." Far more tenderly uttered is the sorrow of Burns—

O pale, pale now those rosy lips  
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly,  
And closed for aye the sparkling glance  
That dwelt on me sae kindly. . . .  
Now green's the sod and cauld the clay  
That wraps my Highland Mary.

At least one other bit from this fruitful passage in "The Grave" of Blair reappears in the familiar poetry of Burns. In the plaintive flow of "Banks an' Braes o' Bonnie Doon" the maiden all forlorn sings sadly—

Thou minds me o' departed joys,  
Departed never to return.

The expression may, of course, be a mere coincidence, but is more probably a recollection of the words of Blair—

Of joys departed  
Not to return, how painful the remembrance !

Other traces of Burns's study of Blair are in all likelihood discoverable in the following parallel passages :—

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march  
To keep his courage cheery.—(*Hallowe'en*.)

This is said of "fechtin' Jamie Fleck" when he boldly went forth into the darkness to sow his hempseed. Blair had already pictured the school-boy as he passed "the lone church-yard"—

Whistling aloud to bear his courage up.

Again, in "The Petition of Bruar Water," a noble poem framed on the lines of Ramsay's

"Salutation of Edinburgh to the Marquis of Carnarvon," Burns describes the harvest moon as making a moving check-work with the trembling twigs and leaves of "lofty firs, and ashes cool," and "fragrant birks in wood-bines drest:" he has a visionary glimpse of—

The reaper's nightly beam  
Mild-chequering thro' the trees.

The same peculiar expression occurs in Blair, of—

Moonshine chequering thro' the trees.

Everybody remembers the line, which prepares us for the revelry of Tam o' Shanter and Soutar Johnnie; it is—

When drouthie neibors neibors meet.

Blair hints at a similar orgy, if the word may be allowed, with a grave-digger for Thaliarch—only his expression is less euphemistic; it is—

When drunkards meet.

It was to a different Blair—"damnation" Blair, as he has been irreverently called—that Burns was indebted for a notably felicitous alteration of his text—

Moodie speeds the holy door  
Wi' tidings of salvation.—*Holy Fair*.

In modern editions of the minor poets the verses of Beattie are usually bound up with those of Blair. Beattie figured so prominently in both prose and rhyme in the heyday of his reputation as rather to astonish us now. "The Minstrel" first appeared in 1771, and from that year till about 1775 its singularly fortunate author was one of the lions of his time, patronised on all hands, and encouraged to roar, by Royalty, the Church, and the literary profession. It was impossible that Burns should be ignorant of him, or fail to peruse him. But Beattie seems to have had little influence upon either the thought or the language of Burns. He was no doubt, though in a small degree, indebted to him—as already shown—for the criticism of Shenstone and Gray which occurs in "The Vision:"—

Thou canst not learn nor can I show . . .  
To wake the bosom-melting throe  
With Shenstone's art,  
Or pour with Gray the moving flow  
Warm on the heart.

Beattie's opinion of those poets will be found in a somewhat bitter and uncharitable poem "on the report of a monument to be erected in Westminster Abbey in memory of a late author," which he had the good taste to reject from later editions of his poems. The author referred to was Churchill, satirised as Bufo. In the course of the satire he makes mention of "Gray's unlaboured art soothing, melting, and ravishing the heart;" of the Elegy written in a Country Churchyard, "flowing in simple majesty of manly woe;" and of the amiability and grace of Shenstone's character as a poet. If there is no trace of Beattie's influence in the lines quoted from "The Vision," there is no trace of it anywhere else in the work of Burns. There are, however, several references which go to show Burns's admiring acquaintanceship with his writings and his reputation. And, indeed, without their evidence, it is past doubt that Burns must have had no mean regard for one who could turn in his own favourite measure so graceful a stanza as—

Oh, bonnie are the greensward howes,  
Where thro' the birks the burnie rows,  
And the bee bums, and the ox lows,  
And saft winds rustle,  
And shepherd lads on sunny knowes  
Blaw the blithe whistle.

The stanza is from a rhyming epistle to Ross of Loches, the author of "The Fortunate Shepherdess"—a pastoral drama which has done for Scotland north of the Tay what Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd" has done for the Lowlands; and it is part of an effort, in the vernacular (of Aberdeen), which approves the capability of Beattie to produce such a poem as that "On Pastoral Poetry" which one diffidently attributes to Burns.

Probably the most convincing proof of Burns's admiration for Beattie is expressed in his letter, of date January 1787, to "Zeluco" Moore—"In a language where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape . . . I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame." Thomson's ability to paint the landscape will be universally allowed, but Beattie's will be questioned—because it is not so generally known. Which of his descriptions of natural scenery may have been in the mind of Burns when he elevated



him to the level of Thomson, it is of course impossible to say definitely, but an examination of "The Minstrel" will reveal several impressive scenes informed with the graceful spirit which pervades the reposeful passages of Campbell's "Wyoming," and which may well have enraptured the responsive heart of Burns. The student who is curious in such matters will find favourable specimens of "Beattie's work" in stanzas xxxviii. and xxxix. of the First Book, and stanza viii. of the Second Book of "The Minstrel." The last-mentioned stanza is distinctly echoed in the well-known "flamingo" stanza of "Gertrude of Wyoming." A better specimen of Beattie's descriptive art occurs in the opening passage of his once widely known, now clean forgotten, "Hermit." But perhaps he attains his highest pitch as a descriptive poet in an obscure poem, written in his twenty-fourth year; here we have such picturesque touches, such suggestive melodies as—

What time the wan moon's yellow horn  
Gleams on the western deep;

and—

Be mine the hollow cliff, whose pine  
Waves o'er the gloomy stream—  
Whence the sacred owl on pinions gray  
Breaks from the rustling boughs,  
And down the lone vale sails away  
To more profound repose.

In January, 1787, Burns sent, by way of New Year's gift, a copy of the Poems of Beattie to a certain Miss Logan, residing with her brother and mother at Park Villa, near Ayr. The brother, well known to us as

"thairm-inspiring Willie," from his accomplishments as a virtuoso on the violin, was a retired military officer holding the rank of major; and the sister was "Sentimental Sister Susie" of the poet's "Epistle to Major Logan." The copy of Beattie was accompanied with the lines:—

I send you more than India boasts  
In Edwin's simple tale,

along with the sentiment—"and may, dear maid, each lover prove an Edwin still to you!"

Perhaps the only other reference to Beattie in the works of Burns are those of the delightfully frank "First Epistle to Lapraik":—

Thought I, can this be Pope, or Steele,  
Or Beattie's work?"

and of "The Ordination":—

Common-sense is gaun, she says,  
To mak to Jamie Beattie  
Her 'plaint this day.

The appositeness of the latter allusion is in the fact that Beattie's "Essay on Truth"—a blast impotently intended to sweep David Hume's philosophy behind the horizon—revealed him as one of the "Moderate" party in the clerical dissensions of the time. Sir Joshua had painted Beattie as a champion aiding an angel in strife with Scepticism, Folly, and Prejudice. His "Essay on Truth" brought him the compliment from Reynolds. But nowadays one only remembers the "Essay" because it explains the picture and illustrates the reference in Burns.

## XXVII.—THE HOMES AND HOME LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

BY PROF. LEWIS STUART.

BURNS is the poet laureate of Scotland, the song laureate of the world. Of a susceptible temperament, he was greatly influenced by surroundings. These affected his character as well as his modes of thought and expression. The homes and home life were important factors in the product we call *the poet Burns*. Four houses in Ayrshire and three in Dumfries-shire are famous as the "homes of Burns." The four in Ayrshire are,—the little cottage in which he was born, Mount

Oliphant, Lochlea, and Moss-giel; the three in Dumfries-shire are,—Ellisland, six miles from the town of Dumfries, the second story on the north side of the Wee Vennel (now Bank street) and the house on Mill-hole Brae (now Burns street), in which he died.

The house in which Robert Burns was born January 25, 1759, is in the parish of Ayr, on the roadside, two miles south of

"Auld Ayr wham ne'er a town surpasses  
For honest men or bonnie lassies."

It is a "clay biggin'" whitewashed, roofed with thatch or straw, and was built by the poet's father. The two apartments, "but and ben," were a kitchen in one end and a room in the other. The kitchen, which was the family room, had a concealed bed, a fireplace and a chimney, all of interest to the curious pilgrim. The furniture was suited to the house, for service not for ornament. Everything was neat and tidy. The mode of living was that usual among the cotters and small farmers of Scotland. It is the same to-day. The "halesome parritch" and other preparations of oatmeal—as brose or hasty pudding, kailbrose, oatmeal cake—were the staple diet. To this add plenty of milk, occasionally butter and cheese :

"The dame brings forth in complimental mood  
To grace the lad, her *well-hain'd kebboek*."

Eggs are a luxury ; on state occasions a chicken "crowns the board."

The poet's father, William Burns, was at this time gardener to William Ferguson of Doonholm, and his mother managed her own little dairy of two and sometimes three cows. Both parents were frugal, industrious, and religious. Stories of gypsies, witches, warlocks, and the like were often heard in the poet's early years and greatly influenced his imagination. "In my infant and boyish days, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, deadlights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraipts, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry."

One incident of his earliest home merits repetition. One stormy morning, when he was only a few days old, a part of the gable of the house fell out, and

"A blast o' Januar' win'  
Blew *hansel* in on Robin."

Mother and child had to be carried through the storm to a neighbour's house. Burns referring to this in after years would say, "No wonder that one ushered into the world in such a tempest should be the victim of stormy passions."

This strong sense of nature's sympathy is the very essence of the lyric mode. No poet ever expressed this sympathy better. Take as illustration, "Afton Water," where nature's sympathy is invoked, or "The Lass o' Ballochmyle," where his "heart rejoiced in nature's joy."

See, too, how the depths of pathos are touched when nature refuses her sympathy, in "Bonnie Doon" or "My Nannie's Awa."

In the little house above described, the Burns family lived till Whitsuntide, 1766, when they moved to Mount Oliphant. Mr. Ferguson had a high opinion of his gardener, and with a view to giving him a chance to improve his fortune, leased to him the farm of Mount Oliphant, also in the parish of Ayr, two miles south-east. This change enabled the father to keep his children at home. The farm consisted of seventy acres and had good buildings on it. The soil, however, was poor and misfortunes plenty. Hard work and the most rigid economy failed. Though "all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their ability, and rather beyond it," and though "for several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, it was of no avail." At thirteen, Burns did a man's work, and at fifteen was the chief labourer on the farm. There were no companions of his own age or near it in the neighbourhood. Few visitors were seen. The family lead an isolated life. The poet in his autobiography says of the life at Mount Oliphant, "The cheerless gloom of a hermit with the increasing toil of a galley slave brought me to my sixteenth year." Hard and monotonous as this life was, it was not without great influence on our poet's life. The distance from school made his attendance irregular, but the work of education was carried forward by his father. When ten or eleven, he says, "I was a fair English scholar, a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles." The other branches of what we call "a common school education" were also acquired in the evenings. In the summer of 1772, he attended week about with his brother Gilbert, the parish school of Dalrymple, to improve his penmanship, and during the following year spent three weeks in Ayr, reviewing English grammar and acquiring a smattering of French.

In the autumn of the next year (1774) Burns made his first essay in love and poetry. The heroine was his partner in the harvest field, Nellie Kilpatrick, daughter of the blacksmith, and his first poem was composed to the tune of this "bonnie, sweet, *sonsie*" [pleasant-appearing] lass's favourite reel. The first stanza is,

"O once I lov'd a bonnie lass,  
Aye, and I love her still;  
And whilst that virtue warms my heart,  
I'll love my handsome Nell."

We give also the fifth stanza, which Principal Shairp says "for directness of feeling and felicity of language, he [Burns] hardly ever surpassed":

"She dresses aye sae clean and neat,  
Baith decent and genteel,  
And then there's something in her gait  
Gars ony dress look weel."

He spent his seventeenth summer (1776) at Kirkoswald studying surveying. He made good progress in his studies, but learned also "to fill his glass and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble." Here, too, he met the second of his poetical heroines, Peggy Thomson, whose charms "overset my trigonometry and sent me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies." on his return from Kirkoswald, Burns went to a dancing school "to give his manners a brush." This he did "in absolute defiance of his father's commands."

For a couple of years before leaving Mount Oliphant, the affairs of the Burns family were in a sorry plight. Mr. Ferguson, who had always been a generous landlord, died. The factor who managed the estate was exacting and severe. Burns has given us a character portrait of him in "The Twa Dogs," and in his letter to Dr. Moore (1787) says, "my indignation yet boils at the threatening, insolent epistles from that Scoundrel Tyrant, which used to set us all in tears." Relief came with the expiration of the lease. The family moved to the farm of Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, Whitsuntide, 1777.

This farm consisted of one hundred and thirty acres on the north bank of the river Ayr, and had a fine outlook. The family remained here seven years. For some time life passed more pleasantly. Our poet had thirty-five dollars a year as wages and some land to raise flax on his own account. He

founded the "Bachelors' Club," which had originally a membership of seven. It met once a month in the Tarbolton Tavern. The sum to be expended by each member at any one meeting was not to exceed three pence (six cents). The first four years of the Lochlea period were probably the happiest of Burn's life, at no time very happy. They close with the story of his first serious *affair du cœur*. He was deeply smitten by the charms of Ellison Bebgie, daughter of a small farmer at Galston, servant in a family on Cessnock Water, some two miles from Lochlea. Ellison was not a beauty, but had the greater charm of "unusual liveliness and grace of mind." His suit was rejected. Neither love songs nor love letters could move her.

Shortly after this rejection, Burns went to Irvine to learn flax-dressing.\* Here he entered into business as a manufacturer and retailer of flax. His partner fleeced him. Burns calls him "a scoundrel of the first water, who made money by the mystery of thieving." Here is a fitting finale to this episode in Burns's life:—"While we were giving a welcoming carousal to the New Year, our shop, by the drunken carelessness of my partner's wife, took fire and was burned to ashes, and left me, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence." During his stay in Irvine, too, he met a young fellow of good education and good parts but bad morals, who "spoke of illicit love with levity, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief." On returning to Lochlea in the spring of 1782, Burns found his father on his deathbed and the affairs of the family in utter ruin. Death saved the good man from the debtor's prison, February 13, 1784.

William Burns was a kind, wise, and affectionate father, leading rather than driving his children in the ways of virtue. He seldom found fault, almost never resorted to the severer discipline so common in Scotland in his day. He carefully practised every known duty, teaching by example as well as precept.

\* Though Burns had no home in Kirkoswald, Irvine, or later in Edinburgh, it is necessary to introduce these episodes, to account for the seeming failure of the home influences.—L. S.



His character portrait in "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is an immortal monument to the "saint, the father, and the husband."

The month after his death, the family moved to Mossgiel, parish of Mauchline. The new home of the Burns family was only two or three miles from Lochlea. The house was a "but-and-ben" and a garret reached by a trap stair. The country round Mauchline is beautiful. The scenery along the river Ayr can scarcely be surpassed for that restful quality so dear to the heart of poet and painter. The farms tenanted by the Burns family had all of them more of beauty than fertility. This one contained one hundred and eighteen acres of cold clay soil. The money necessary to stock it was obtained by the members of the family ranking with their father's creditors for arrears of wages. Gavin Hamilton, a lawyer in Mauchline, was their landlord. Misfortune still dogged the family. The first year, from bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, half the crops was lost. This upset the fine resolutions with which our bard entered on this enterprise.

In April or May following the removal to Mossgiel, Burns began his acquaintance with "Bonnie Jean,"—Jean Armour—an event which affected all his future life, imparting to it its brightest lights and its darkest shadows. The two years and a half between the arrival at Mossgiel and at Edinburgh revealed Burns's genius as a poet and his weakness as a man. Amid the drudgery of the farm life and its failures, Burns sought distraction in poetry.

"It's aye a treasure  
My chief, amais't my only pleasure."

He wrote in rapid succession most of his very best poetry during this period, and on July 30th 1786, appeared the famous Kilmarnock edition of his poems. This proclaimed his genius to the world. In the spring of that same year he had married Jean Armour. The marriage was secret and irregular. Burns, however, gave a written acknowledgement of it, thus legalizing it according to Scottish law. When Jean's father found out how matters were he was wroth. He insisted that his daughter should destroy the evidence of her marriage and have nothing further to do with Burns. He then instituted legal proceedings

against him. Burns terrified as well as disgraced gave up his share of the farm to his brother, retired into hiding, and made arrangements to go to Jamaica to avoid the consequences of his folly. This part of the Armour episode does small credit either to the virtue or the courage of Burns. The Highland Mary episode belongs here too, an episode within an episode. Taken together, they well illustrate the strange contradictions in Burns's life and writings,—the generosity and selfishness, the noble reaches of aspiration, and the grossness, the greatness, and the littleness of Burns—contradictions only to be accounted for on the hypothesis of an intense, emotional nature, sensitive as intense.

To get money to pay his passage to Jamaica, he was persuaded by Gavin Hamilton and other friends to publish his poems, did so, and from the venture realized one hundred dollars. Of this he spent forty-seven for a passage and was on his way to Greenock to embark when the report of a letter written by Dr. Thomas Blacklock, the blind poet of Edinburgh, and the success of the Kilmarnock edition, turned his attention and his footsteps toward the capital.

Burns reached Edinburgh November 28, 1786. He almost immediately became the lion of the season. The Earl of Glencairn, the Duchess of Gordon, Lord Monboddo, Dugald Stewart, Hugh Blair, Adam Smith, Harry Erskine, the *crème de la crème* of Edinburgh society, received him with enthusiasm and welcomed him as a prodigy. The ploughman of yesterday bore himself well in this aristocratic company. His perfect self-possession, surprising powers of conversation, and courtesy of deportment astonished them. He was introduced to Wm. Creece, the leading publisher of the city, by Glencairn. The Caledonian Hunt subscribed for one hundred copies of a new edition of his works. Several noblemen and gentlemen of means subscribed liberally—one for forty-two copies, a second for forty, a third for twenty. The next summer Burns made a tour through the south of Scotland, a visit to his Ayrshire home, and a trip into the Highlands. Everywhere he was received with cordiality and éclat. He received the freedom of the city at Dumfries, was entertained as an honoured guest by the



Duke of Athole at Blair Athole, and at Fochabers by the Duke and Duchess of Gordon. He returned to Edinburgh in October.

The second winter in the capital, however, was very different. He no longer was lionized. His aristocratic friends gave him the cold shoulder. Only the orgies of the Crochallan Club were left of the festivities of Scotland's capital, but he consoled himself as best he could with the thought of an "independence at the plough tail," to which he could withdraw. Even during the gay and brilliant life of his first winter in Edinburgh he reveals in his "Commonplace Book" a heart flooded with the bitterness of Marah. What wonder that after the slights to which he was exposed in this second season he was glad to shake from his feet the dust of the gay capital and to return to the quiet of the country. In February, 1788, he had a settlement with his publisher, Creech, and the following month left Edinburgh richer in money by £2,000 or £3,000, richer in experience, richer in reputation, but not richer in character. In April of this same year he was privately married to "bonnie Jean," and in June went to his farm in Ellisland.

Ellisland is about six miles from the town of Dumfries, on the bank of the Nith. The location is a lovely one and the outlook beautiful. Burns was told that he made a poet's not a farmer's choice when he selected it. The charm of the river and the fine view of rich holms and noble woods with their background of the "many-hued" hills prevailed. The farm had a hundred acres. There were no buildings on it. Burns had to build these for himself. On laying the foundation of his house, it is said he reverently uncovered his head and invoked God's blessing. Not till December did he bring his wife and family to Ellisland, and it was about six months after this before they went to live in their own house. When it was ready Burns had his servant girl take a bowl of salt with the family Bible on the top of it and go into the house to possess it, he and his wife following her arm in arm. Then followed the house warming. The house was a simple "but, and ben" with a garret. It is only a few yards from the river. A short distance from

the house is the kitchen garden, and near the house is a fine spring of sweet water. This is the first home that Burns ever called his own. Here he raised the family altar, gathering his household at eventide for family worship, which he conducted himself. He attended church regularly. He gave himself with earnestness to his farm work and seemed determined on a new and better life. Though on first coming to Ellisland he wrote "for all the pleasurable part of life called social communication I am at the very elbow of existence," this was not so very long. His reputation as a poet soon brought him many callers, and his hospitable nature and convivial habits allowed these to interfere with his work.

In the second summer of his stay in Ellisland (1789), he received appointment as exciseman or gauger. This had been promised him before he left Edinburgh. From this time on he performed the duties of this office with diligence but never with satisfaction. The work required interfered with his success as a farmer, called him much from home, and led him into company and temptations which greatly hastened his death. Welcome everywhere and with the welcome always the bottle, he drank both deep and often. In a little over three years from his arrival at Ellisland, he had to dispose of his stock, surrender his lease, and move to Dumfries. Ichabod, the glory is departed. The possibilities of Ellisland were great and the prospect of his life there, judged by the first year was good. In Ellisland, if anywhere, the poet might have found happiness and fulfilled his mission nobly. Here he experienced and might have continued to experience what he calls, and justly so, the "true pathos and sublime of human life" by making

"A happy fireside clime  
For weans and wife."

But the lessons learned at Kirkoswald and Irvine and Edinburgh could not be forgotten.

In November, 1791, Burns moved into Dumfries. He occupied for a year and a half three rooms of a second floor on the north side of the Wee Vennel (now Bank Street). All the rooms were small. The central one, used as a study, was very small; it was a bed closet rather than a room. The ground floor was the stamp office, and the third story was

occupied by an "honest blacksmith." Almost directly across the street lived Captain Hamilton, his landlord. The captain was well off, a friend and admirer of the poet. This friendship and admiration he would occasionally show by asking Burns to a Sunday dinner. Burns had many friends among the county families, but the life of the poet in Dumfries was not a happy one. Much of his time when not engaged in performing the duties of his office, was consumed at the Globe Tavern and similar resorts. He was of course the oracle of the company always. Visitors from a distance, and the few country gentlemen who still kept up acquaintance with him, were wont to send for Burns to join them in their potations, and he was always ready to accommodate them. It was sport for them but death to him. He had crossed swords with the giants of the Scottish capital, he had quaffed bumpers from the enchanting cup of popular applause, and the little home in the Wee Vennel with the contrast of what he had been and what he might have been then, drove him too often to drown his care and remorse with boon companions. He performed his duties with fidelity and success. As he neared his death, like the fabled swan, he poured forth a flood of wondrous song.

At Whitsuntide, 1793, he moved from the Wee Vennel into a better house in the Mill-hole Brae (now Burns street). This was a cottage with two floors and an attic. The lower floor contained a kitchen and a good-sized parlour; the second floor two rooms of unequal size, in the smaller one of which the poet breathed his last. The attic had two bedrooms in which the children slept, and between these a closet nine feet square used by Burns as a study.

His mode of life was unchanged. His hopes of promotion were doomed to disappointment. The bitterness of life became more intense. He still carried on a large correspondence, and wrote his wondrous songs. He might occasionally be seen helping his children to learn their lessons or reading poetry with them. Mr. Gray, their teacher in Dumfries, affirms that no parent he knew watched more carefully over his children's education, and that the benefit of the father's instructions was apparent in the excellence of his son's daily school work. The end was fast approaching. His last illness lasted from October, 1795. Premature old age had come. Death was hastened by a severe cold caught in the following January. Returning late from the Globe Tavern, he sank down in the deep snow overcome by drowsiness and the liquor he had taken, and there slept for some hours. From the cold thus caught he never fully recovered. On July 4 he tried sea bathing at Brow. On the 18th of the same month he returned to Dumfries; on the 21st he passed away, only thirty-seven, worn out.

Great is the purifying power of death, especially where the essential nature is noble and generous. The stains on the 'scutcheon of Burns, made by passion and excess, though they cannot be wholly effaced, are seen but dimly under the laurel wreath. The influences of Burns's homes and home life were helpful to him in many ways. To them are due what little happiness he enjoyed. To them are due all that is best in his life and writings. For them everyone is grateful who loves sincerely the world's greatest song writer and Scotland's greatest poet, Robert Burns.

#### XXVIII.—BURNS AND THE ARDWALL FAMILY.

THE death of Mr. Walter McCulloch of Ardwall recalled the friendly part which his uncle played towards Robert Burns, at a time when differences of political sentiment had caused the poet to be cold-shouldered by the fashionable circle who had courted his society for a season. The occasion was the day of the grand county ball held in 1794, on the 4th of

June, in honour of the birth-day of "great George, our King." These annual gatherings were held at that time in the old Assembly Rooms in Irish Street, at the foot of the George Inn Close, subsequently occupied as a school by the late Mr. Gemmell. The incident is thus narrated by Mr. J. G. Lockhart:

Mr. David Macculloch, a son of the Laird of Ardwell, has told me that he was seldom more grieved than when, riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening, to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite part was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognise him. The horseman dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said, "Nay, nay, my young friend—that's all over now;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad—

"His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow  
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;  
But now he let's wear ony way it will hing,  
And casts himself dowie upon the corn-bing.

Oh were we young, as we ance hae been,  
We suld hae been galloping down on yon green,  
And linking it ower the lily-white lea—  
*And warena my heart light I wad die.*"

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He immediately, after citing these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and, taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably until the hour of the ball arrived, with a bowl of his usual potation, and bonnie Jean's singing of some verses which he had recently composed.

About a fortnight later Burns addressed to his friend M'Culloch the following familiar epistle:

Dumfries, 21st June, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,—My long projected journey through your country is at last fixed; and on Wednesday next, if you have nothing of more importance to do, take a saunter down to Gatehouse about two or three o'clock; I will be happy to take a draught of M'Kune's best with you. Collector Syme will be at Glens about that time, and will meet us about dish-of-tea hour. Syme goes also to Kerroughtree, and let me remind you of your kind promises to accompany me there; I will need all the friends I can muster, for I am indeed ill at ease whenever I approach your honourables and right honourables.

The laird of Kirroughtrie, of whom the writer professes to stand thus in awe, was Mr. Patrick Heron, in whose interest as Whig candidate for the Stewartry in the following year Burns wrote several ballads, and on whose side he promised, in a prose epistle, "to muster all the votaries of honest laughter and fair, candid ridicule."

Mr. Lockhart is not strictly accurate when he designates Mr. David M'Culloch as "a son of the 'Laird of Ardwell.'" His father, also named David, had died in 1793, and at the time of the Dumfries meeting with Burns the estate was in possession of his elder brother, Edward. It passed to another brother, James Murray M'Culloch, the father of the lately deceased proprietor, in 1796, on the accidental death of Edward, who was thrown from his horse near Kirkcudbright. David, the friend of Burns, survived until 1825, when he died at Cheltenham.

## XXIX.—BONNIE JEAN.

BY GEORGE DOBIE.

WE'LL sing the nicht Jean Armour's praise,  
She's worthy o' a sang,  
For it was Burns, her ain guidman,  
That raised her 'bin the thrang.  
While bleechin' claes on Mauchline Braes,  
By Rab she first was seen,  
Where Cupid's darts pierced baith the hearts  
O' Burns and bonnie Jean.

Jean was the jewel o' his heart,  
The apple o' his e'e,  
And little kent that country maid  
That she a queen wad be.  
For to us lang she'll reign in sang.  
And gain oor high esteem;  
She prov'd through life a faithfu' wife,  
Our poet's bonnie Jean.



To Burns, Jean was the sweetest lass  
That ever graced the West,  
Nae ither belle could her surpass,  
She was to him the best.  
The westlin' win's will cease to blaw,  
And gowans deck the green,  
Before it ever fades awa'  
The name o' bonnie Jean.

On this, our poet's natal day,  
We'll sing to bonnie Jean;  
Had Rab himsel' been here to hear't,  
He had been proud, I ween.  
For this ance charmin', artless lass,  
This peerless village queen,  
She'll lang remembered be by us  
As Burn's bonnie Jean.

XXX.—"SCOTS WHA HAE."

*How the famous Scotch war song was composed.*

IN an interleaved copy of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* there is a note on the fragments of an old song, in the handwriting of Burns, in which the following passage occurs—"Many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses." It would be difficult to discover any better illustration of this remark than the air to which the poet wrote the memorable words of "Scots wha hae." It has been known by many names, and in one disguise or another can be traced back at least four hundred years.

The words of its earliest known appearance as a song, "Hey! Now the Day Dawis," are not probably the first verses to which the tune was attached. Although the date of the birth of Alexander Montgomerie, the author of the words, is not known, he must have been writing previous to 1568, the date of the Bannatyne Manuscript, as some of his poetry occurs in that collection. But the song by that name was known long before his time. It is mentioned by Gavin Douglas (1512), Bishop of Dunkeld, in the prologue to the thirteenth book of his translation of Virgil, as a favourite song among the vulgar; while his still older contemporary, Dunbar, alludes to it in one of his poems, in which he laughs at certain minstrels of Edinburgh for having only two tunes—

Your commone menstrallis has no tune  
But "Now the Day Dawis," and "Into June."

Montgomerie's verses, judging from their style, were probably not written before the reign of James VI. Farther back, however, than the Douglas and Dunbar references carry us, all is conjecture; and the tradition alluded to by Burns that it was the air to which

Bruce's army marched to the victory of Bannockburn is tradition and nothing more.

How the air acquired its later name of "Hey, tutti, taitie," or what that title means, has never been satisfactorily explained.

Montgomerie's song was long supposed to be lost, until Sibbald, as he tells us himself in his *Chronicles of Scottish Poetry*, was lucky enough to find it in a manuscript collection of poems in the College Library of Edinburgh. The music which Sibbald gives to the old song, although a little less ornate, is fundamentally the same air as that now in use.

A hundred years after Montgomerie's time the tune re-appears in a new dress, this time in a Jacobite costume, in the toast song of "Here's to the King, Sir," published in Thomson's *Scottish Airs*, and containing an allusion to the project of Charles XII. of Sweden coming to the help of the House of Stuart, which enables us to fix its date about 1718. So all the sets of words, from first to last, can be sung to the same tune, by whatever name we choose to call it. Montgomerie's "Hey! Now the Day Dawis," of the end of the 16th century; the Jacobite drinking song of the beginning of last century; as well as the "Scots wha hae" of Burns, and Lady Nairne's "Land of the Leal"—both now about a hundred years old—are all fitted to the same frame, both musically and metrically. The poems in each case are written in the same stanza, that known as the Kyrielle, consisting of four lines, the first, second, and third rhyming, while the fourth is used as a refrain.

There has been some difference of opinion as to the exact date and circumstances under which Burns produced "Scots wha hae," arising out of a discrepancy between a state-



ment made by Burns in a letter to his friend Thomson, and a statement of quite a different kind made by his more intimate friend, John Syme. Mr. Syme declares that the poem was composed when they were riding together through a thunderstorm between Kenmare and Gatehouse, in July, 1793, and that on the following day Burns gave him a copy of the poem. But the poet, writing to Thomson a full month after, says that he wrote it "yesternight." The fact that the two friends did make the journey, as well as the time and place of it, is not disputed; and in believing that Burns was inaccurate, we are only believing in inaccuracies he was continually committing, many of them far more ridiculous than this. In one case he sent his friend Thomson a song which he declared he had just finished—"glowing from the mint" were the words he used—while he had sent the same poem two years before in a letter to Clarinda. There was no intention to misrepresent matters; but Burns was careless and forgetful about such things, and his pockets as well as his brains were kept crammed with song material by his indefatigable provider, Mr. Thomson, so that he must have had many poems about him in every stage of development. Lockhart says we have the germ of Burns's ode in the rapture he expressed while standing on the field of Bannockburn, an eloquent note upon which appears in his Journal of August, 1787, six years before the poem made its appearance. The poet, we must remember, had a reputation for improvising, which he was vain enough to encourage, although he lets us know what care he bestowed on his higher efforts; how, when all his preliminary cogitation and workings of his bosom were over, he retired with his subject "to the solitary fireside of his study." Who now would compare any of his admitted impromptus with his finished work? Had the poet lived to superintend a final edition of his works, he would not have suffered them to appear in the same volume with the "Cotter's Saturday Night," "Hallowe'en," or "Tam o' Shanter." Poems like "Scots wha hae" are not written off the reel; and when Burns sent it to his friend Thomson, he probably did not intend to convey anything more than that he had given the final revision,

the last touch to a poem he had been working on for some time, and of which—as we have seen—a prose version had been standing ready for use in his Journal for six years. The poet gains nothing from those worshippers of his who with more zeal than discretion, credit him, in addition to his wonderful gifts, with the power of working miracles.

The tradition that "Tam o' Shanter" was the unpremeditated outcome of a river-side ramble in the autumn of 1790 is another example of those ridiculous exaggerations, which can be abundantly refuted from the poet's own letters. The story is mainly supported by "the not immaculate M'Diarmid," as Lockhart calls him, who, on purpose to make the performance more wonderful still, says that the poet wrote the verses "on the top of a sod-dike." In a letter, however, to Alexander Cunningham, dated 22nd January, 1791, (and this furnishes an exact parallel to the "Scots wha hae" letter to Thomson) Burns says:—"I have *just finished* a poem, which you will receive enclosed." The poem was "Tam o' Shanter," and the letter scatters to the winds M'Diarmid and the sod-dike tradition. Burns knew well the pains the poem had cost him. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop he says "that 'Tam o' Shanter' shows a *finishing polish* that I despair of ever excelling." When Ben Jonson said that a good poet is made as well as born, he might have said the same thing of a good poem—that, at all events, was Burns's opinion. Writing to Lady Don, we find him saying:—"Though the rough material of fine writing is undoubtedly the gift of genius, the workmanship is as certainly the united effort of labour, attention and pains." Burns's traditional feat on the banks of the Nith was impossible not only for him but for any poet that ever lived. Neither Dante by the Arno, nor Shakespeare by the Avon, could have gone out for a river stroll and brought back in his pocket such a piece of finished art as "Tam o' Shanter"—one of the masterpieces of the world—not less remarkable for its marvellous construction than for its unrivalled imagery. It has the humour of Falstaff and the weird horror of the "Inferno."

And so "Scots wha hae," like "Tam o' Shanter," and indeed all Burns's best work,

can easily be distinguished by the careful perfection of their finish from those other efforts of his which he did not think were worth the same labour. Only in his case, as in others, where the highest art comes into play, the products which appear to be the most natural and easy and artless are just those upon which the greatest art has been bestowed. No doubt, then, the story of John Syme is a true one, and that when he rode through the thunder-storm with his singing and gesticulating companion, he heard the first rough murmur of that great hymn which has since become the "Marseillaise" of Scotland. The story at all events has been accepted by one of his best biographers, Lockhart, and by his still more distinguished critic, Carlyle, and there it may safely be allowed to rest.

In the history of a tune we occasionally encounter some curious and unsuspected transformations. The air usually sung to the Hundredth Psalm, and which has been by some erroneously ascribed to Luther, was a love ditty long before his day. Henry II.'s Queen used to sing to him her favourite Psalm, "Rebuke me not in thine indignation," to a fashionable jig. The air of "Tutti, taitie," shows the same curious variety of uses. From a quaint old pastoral it passes into a boisterous drinking song. Then from a fierce and defiant battle-cry, it seeks rest, as if with wearied wing, in the tender pathos of "The Land o' the Leal." Verily, on the world's stage, a tune, like a man, in its time plays many parts.

### XXXI.—IN MEMORIAM, JAMES M'KIE.

BORN, 1816.—DIED, 1891.

By JOHN HYSLOP.

"Touch once more a sober measure,  
And let punch and tears be shed,  
For a prince of good old fellows  
That, alack-a-day! is dead."

*"Lament for Captain Paton," by J. G. Lockhart.*

Thus in the century's earlier years  
A poet troll'd his doleful lay  
For one, a prince among his peers,  
Like him, we miss and mourn to-day.  
Yorick has gone. We knew him well;  
His like again we'll never see;  
But we will to our children tell  
The name and fame of James M'Kie.

We'll miss the click-clack of his staff  
As he went walking up and down,  
With cheering word and merry laugh,  
Through all the streets and lanes of town.  
As some lone lake in its far deeps  
A star from the high heaven inurns,  
So, deep within his soul who sleeps,  
Lay shrined the name of Robert Burns.

His queer, quaint saws, with wisdom fraught,  
He gave not with a canting whine,  
But his own thoughts he spake and taught,  
Nor heeded much for yours or mine.  
He sought for truth—he hated sham  
And snivelling, sanctimonious phrase;

Believed no Theosophic cram,  
Nor any mad Mahatma craze.

In all this wide and teeming earth  
There lives no purely perfect thing;  
We halt and stumble from our birth,  
And he was but a *man* I sing.  
But see him o'er a social cup,  
Filled "wi' a wee drap barley bree"—  
Then the warm heart came bubbling up  
We loved and prized in James M'Kie.

Peace to his shade! why weep or wail?  
Draw close the shroud about his brow.  
We cannot pierce beyond The Veil,  
He's safe within God's keeping now.  
We'll keep his fame from moth or rust,  
And sound his name to future days,  
For it can only drop to dust  
With the proud pile he helped to raise.

Where'er the foot of Scotsman turns—  
In every land, on every sea—  
They'll link the name of Robert Burns  
With his disciple James M'Kie.

## XXXII.—ROBERT BURNS.

*A Lecture delivered in Investigator Hall, Paine Memorial, before the Ingersoll Secular Society.*

BY DR. W. SYMINGTON BROWN.

Reprinted from the BOSTON INVESTIGATOR, March 15th, 1893.

THERE is something peculiar about the life and fame of Robert Burns. He was born in 1759, and died in 1796. More than a century has gone since he became famous; nearly a century has passed away since he died; but his memory is as green and as well-beloved as if he had only died yesterday. But two names I know anything about can compare with his in this respect—names which are loved, cherished, almost idolized in the hearts of the common people, who know their true friends by a sort of instinct, who do not need legal proofs to convince them that they are right, who arrive at their conclusions by the short cut of the human heart—these men are William Shakespeare and Marcus Aurelius. The former is too well known to need comment; but the great Roman emperor is not so familiar to American ears. A personal experience, which occurred to me in 1884, while on a visit to Scotland, will explain what I mean. I had gone across the ocean for rest and recreation, and was wandering about the streets of Glasgow, when I reached an Italian image store, and stepped inside to look at figures and casts in plaster-of-paris. Amongst the rest I found a small bust of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, and I asked the proprietor, "Who is that?" He straightened himself, and replied, with an unction which only a fellow-countryman can feel, "Marcus Aurelius, Signor, our beloved ruler." So I bought the little image, carried it home with me, and it stands on my office mantelpiece in the place of honour. Why? Because of all the men that ever lived I believe that he was the greatest and most lovable. Seventeen hundred years have gone by, his very dust has disappeared, but there is scarcely a Roman house to-day, however poor its inmates, which does not contain something in remembrance of the man who did more for humanity *per se* than any other citizen ever did, and who, although he was not a Christian, is still loved by all honest men and women, Christians included.

As I will try to demonstrate, the same elements enter into the popularity of Robert Burns. Men do not respect a coward; they do not love a selfish man, and they worship men who make outspoken demands for justice.

Burns died in his thirty-eighth year. He began to work on his father's farm when merely a boy; he did a man's work—hard, laborious work, averaging about fourteen hours a day. In the twelve or thirteen years of literary work, during which he also toiled as a farmer or as an exciseman, he wrote, in prose and verse, an amount of matter which fills several volumes; nearly all of it well worth reading, and most of it so noble, truthful, and inspiring, that the rational portion of the world "will not willingly let [it] die." Two fair inferences may be drawn from these facts.

First, Burns must have been a very industrious man. No shilly-shally, lackadaisical rhymers, like many who went before and came after him, but an honest worker who set a proper estimate on the value of time, and worked while it was day with all his might.

Second, it is evident that no habitual drunkard could have produced such an amount of good literary work in so short a time. The notion that Burns was a very intemperate man—assiduously spread by religious bigots and total abstainers—has no foundation in fact, is proved to be impossible by the quantity and quality of his literary work, and is easily explained by the convivial habits almost universal at that time. Everybody drank whiskey then—even the clergy; and I strongly suspect that a good many people in Scotland drink whiskey still.

Compare Burns with Coleridge. We never hear any complaint from the same "rigidly righteous" class about Coleridge being a slave to opium. Although a man of genius, he was lazy. All Coleridge's poems worth preserving might be put into a thin pamphlet. His



"Table Talk" and other prose writings unmistakably smell of drugs; here and there a feeble spark of genius, and the rest silly namby-pambyism about creeds and other foolish topics. Why do we read nothing against Coleridge? Simply because he defended the Church; in a maudlin sort of a way, it is true; but in what other way can anybody defend it? Burns attacked the Church; he exposed its hypocrisy and greed. That of course proved that he was a bad man—a drunkard.

Burns was a peasant; the son of peasants. His moral surroundings in early life were good. Both father and mother were decent, serious folks, who had a moderate amount of intellectual culture, and who exerted themselves to the utmost to give their children a sound, useful education. But the physical surroundings were antagonistic, unhealthy. I beg special attention to this aspect of the case, because none of Burns's biographers or critics have taken it into account. All the writers I refer to—Currie, Cunningham, Carlyle, Blackie, Hatley Waddell, etc.—tell us about the poverty of his parents, but they do not even hint at the monstrous injustice responsible for that poverty. Robert's father was certainly not to blame. He was a very industrious man; but the money he was obliged to pay to his landlords, for the mere privilege of being allowed to work, reduced him to abject poverty. Landlordism, like the old man of the sea who sat on Sinbad's shoulders, clung to him through life, and crushed him. After paying rent, what was left was not sufficient to furnish the necessities of life, to say nothing about luxuries. It would be out of place to-day to discuss the labour question; but, to prevent misconception, allow me to explain that the term "rent," in this connection, does not apply to houses, only to land. William Burns built, with his own hands, the poor cottage in which Robert was born. *It was the land that he paid rent for*; and any candid person must surely admit that there is an essential difference between paying for the privilege of occupying a house, which somebody must have built, and the use of unimproved land, which no human being created. Land, water, sunbeats and air do not owe their ex-

istence to man's labour. A house does; it must be built. I assert that everybody has a birthright in the use of as much land as he needs to sustain life, as much but no more. He never can have a right to peddle it out at either a high or a low rent to others. Might has hitherto controlled this land question. No king nor cunning priest created land. All that any man should pay for the use of it is for the privilege of selection, and the money thus paid should go into the public treasury, to be expended for the public benefit.

When Robert Burns began to earn money as a farm-labourer—doing a man's work, and doing it well, all that he received in the shape of wages was thirty-five dollars a year and his board. If you deduct the cost of clothes, and the few books he bought, we can easily estimate how little would be left for dissipation. The fact is that Burns was never a dissipated man in the ordinary meaning of that term. He was a passionate man—all poets are—and his passions sometimes carried him into miry places. Do *you* know any one who is sinless? I don't; and, what is more, I don't desire to know one, for he would be a monstrosity. A small sect of Christians exist who call themselves holiness people, and who say that they are perfect in holiness. I have met with a few of these people; but most of them do not appear to be quite as near perfection as many others who make no claim to that dubious honour.

The fact is that Robert Burns was an honest, industrious man, willing to work for small pay; anxious to provide all the comforts he could for his wife and children; generous with his money when he had any, and remarkably unselfish. Only a clear-headed man could have arrived at the logical conclusions he did about labour 100 years ago. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, he says:—

"I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, a *cursed life*! As to a laird farming his own property, sowing his own corn in hope, and reaping it, in spite of brittle weather, in gladness; knowing that none can say unto him, What dost thou? fattening his herds, shearing his flocks, rejoicing at Christmas, and begetting sons and



daughters, until he be the venerated, gray-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! but devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat." This is precisely the same idea which Carlyle afterwards blurted out so tersely :—

"The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner ; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the *Oeil de Beuf*, hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and call it rent." Yes! and this alchemy resulted in the French revolution, with due blowing up of the perfumed alchemist.

There is one point about Robert Burns sometimes overlooked, *viz.*, that he never had any other than the most meagre common school education. He never had free access to what was known about science even in that day of darkness. For there was not much known about chemistry, geology, biology, or hygiene a century ago, even by the advance guard of freethinkers. Our own Voltaire, with all his talent and industry imagined that fossil shells found on mountain tops had been dropped there by pilgrims! Decent people, like Burns's father, still believed that prayers could avert calamities and cure cancers! And the bulk of common people imagined that a dirty, lousy saint, who fasted in a cell, was a much better man than a clean sinner who worked in the fields! When we appreciate how far advanced in freedom of thought Robert Burns was; how ably he dissected the silly, religious sophistries of his day, one must admire the courage he displayed in expressing unpopular opinions. The highest excellence in the character of Burns is his sincerity. Whatever germinates in his fertile brain comes out, without fear or favour. And as we cannot conceive of a true soul defending any form of slavery, his innermost and his outermost thoughts were always pledged to freedom;—freedom of mind, freedom of body, the greatest good—not of the greatest number merely, but of every human being on the face of the earth. It is a melancholy fact, and one which marks how little real progress we have made yet that so few persons possess courage enough to *say* what they *think*.

Another point worthy of notice is this.

From early boyhood up to mature manhood Burns lived principally on oatmeal and milk—mostly buttermilk. Animal food was seldom in his father's house, and it could not have been very plenty in his own on an annual income of \$350. With the exception of his two visits to Edinburgh, and the journeys he made while there, Burns's daily diet must have been of the simplest kind. Beef is a good thing in its own place, no doubt; but it does not seem to be essential to genius. These remarks are not intended as a plea for vegetarianism. A moderate amount of animal food is necessary in our cold climate; but I think that Americans and English people eat more flesh than is good for them.

In Burns's letter to Dr. Moore, which contains a brief biography of the poet, he says :—"I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say 'idiot piety,' because I was then but a child."

It did not take Burns very long to get rid of his "idiot piety." No man of moderate intelligence, who thinks about the subject at all, can avoid entertaining doubts about religion. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Burns says :—

"Can it be possible that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence? . . . Ye venerable sages and holy flamens, is there probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories, of another world beyond death? or, are they all alike baseless visions and fabricated fables? If there is another life, it must only be for the just, the benevolent, and the humane."

Robert Burns, like Voltaire and Paine, was a deist; *i.e.*, he believed in a personal God, who created the universe, and rules it somewhat after the fashion of an ordinary king. This hypothesis includes what is commonly called divine providence. It is not necessary to discuss deism to-day. Not a few good men still believe in it, after a fashion; but advanced thinkers have long since abandoned the theory as untenable. They have become agnostic; *i.e.*, men who believe only what they clearly understand.

There are numberless things in Nature which the human mind has not mastered yet, such, *e.g.*, as the origin of evil. It puzzles us to find out why so many suffer pain, the nature and object of which we cannot fully explain ; and, consequently, we cannot believe in a theory which is as obscure as the thing itself. A so-called religious explanation is like a kitten chasing its tail ; it may be amusing, but it is not explanatory.

One thing is very plain about Robert Burns. He was not a Calvinist. He held the Westminster Confession of Faith in healthy abhorrence ; and, indeed, he may fairly be credited with the merit of giving it its death-blow. It is difficult for the present generation to form an accurate idea of the relative standing which the clergy and laity occupied in Burns's day. A clergyman was a power, not only in the church but in the state, equal if not superior, to the civil magistrate. The virtue in which our clergy are most deficient is humility. They keep the keys of heaven, and admit or reject whom they please. It is one of our popular mistakes that protestant priests claim less than Roman Catholic ones. They both claim the same power, *viz.*, the right to remit sins or to fasten them on the culprit for ever. They even manufacture sins—such as Sabbath desecration and kin marriages—and impose penalties for committing them !

A century ago, protestant priests were more outspoken than they are to-day, and they possessed more power. If they had not been backed by the civil magistrate you may be sure that Robert Burns would not have stood up in church to be rebuked by a clergyman for a sexual offence.

Burns's celebrated poem, entitled "The Holy Fair," has reference to the sacrament of the "Lord's Supper," which, in Scotland, is celebrated twice a year. In county parishes it is customary to invite several ministers to assist in the performance ; and sometimes hundreds of people assemble on these occasions, after the fashion of our summer camp-meetings. The poem is a graphic description of these religious vanity fairs.

Two reflections occur to me in connection with this poem. While I assert that there are no obscene passages in any of Burns's poems, I think it must be admitted that some

of them contain words not usually read in public. The same remark applies to Smollett's and Fielding's novels, and also to the Bible. I do not intend to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of this delicate question to-day. All that I claim for Burns, Fielding, and Smollett, I also claim for the authors of the Bible—fair play—that they should be judged by their obvious intention, and the standard of manners prevalent at the time they wrote.

The other reflection is this :—We are too apt to assume that much more progress has been made in morals than the facts warrant. The moral standard depicted in "The Holy Fair" is not a high one ; but if a photograph were made of the sexual morals at a camp-meeting in Massachussets or Maine, would it be much higher ? I doubt it. Some progress has been made in a century ; but I think that part of the apparent progress depends on adroitly covering up certain sins, hiding them rather than avoiding them. The civilized world has become sharper in the art of concealment—more Uriah Heep-like, besides having somewhat less wickedness to conceal. And it is my firm belief that no organisation has done more than the Church to help hypocrites in this modern art of concealment. If a mercantile rascal intends to cheat his creditors, he rents a pew ; if he means to do something outrageously mean, he becomes a church member ; and if he intends to out-herod Herod in thieving, he becomes a deacon or a Sunday-school superintendent. The mantle of religious hypocrisy may indeed be said to "cover a multitude of sins."

In more than a score of places, Robert Burns expresses his doubts about religion and the soul's immortality. He says : "All my fears and cares are of this world. If there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a deist ; but I fear every fair, unprejudiced enquirer must, in some degree, be a sceptic. It is not that there are any very staggering arguments against the immortality of man ; but, like electricity, phlogiston, etc., the subject is so involved in darkness that we want data to go upon." In another letter he writes : "Of all nonsense, religious nonsense is the most nonsensical : so enough and more than enough of it."

When we recollect that these sentences were written more than one hundred years ago, we can realize how liberal-minded Burns must have been. It is true, he never rose to the height of pantheism; he seems to have been almost shackled by the gross idea of a personal God, who did as he pleased; and the grand thought of eternal law, I fear, was to him a shut book.

The Scottish clergy, as a whole, were not friendly to Burns. A few of the more liberal sort enjoyed his attacks on calvinism, in a quiet way, they themselves being afraid to say what they thought about it. In our day, we can scarcely conceive of the subjection to religious despotism which prevailed at that time.

In a letter to his friend Mr. Nicol, Burns says: "You must have heard how the Rev. Mr. Lawson and the rest of that faction have accused the unfortunate and Rev. Mr. Heron, that, in ordaining Mr. Nelson, he, the said Heron, feloniously and treasonably bound the said Nelson to the Confession of Faith, *so far as it was agreeable to reason and the Word of God!*" That is to say, it was felony and treason to doubt the infallibility of a document written by a handful of protestant priests! And yet the successors of these men pretend to be horrified at Leo's claim of infallibility. Poor old pope, he surely has as good a right to this ridiculous claim as they have. In 1740, the presbytery of Auchterarder required all candidates for the pulpit to sign the following moral declaration: "I believe that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin, in order to our coming to Christ." To avoid sinful deeds would indeed be a work of supererogation when a belief in Christ's saving blood can wipe them all away.

But we will now look at Robert Burns from another standpoint—the social one. There can be no doubt that he excelled both as a conversationalist and as a letter writer. Those who had the privilege of social intercourse with the poet, and who were competent to judge, all agree that his conversational powers were marvellous. Some say that his familiar talks were even better than his poetry. This appeared obvious on his first visit to Edinburgh, during the few months of

prosperity he enjoyed, when men like Dugald Stewart, Dr. Blacklock, and other dignitaries met him, and were as much astonished as delighted that a ploughman could discuss abstruse questions with them and hold his own. We can only regret that some faithful Boswell did not stick to him, and note down the witty, caustic sayings of Scotland's greatest poet. Dr. Samuel Johnson's books are no longer read; they are really obsolete; but Boswell's account of what Johnson said still lives, and bids fair to live for generations to come.

Burns also excelled as a letter writer. Whatever he did he tried to do well. Many of his letters were re-written from the first scroll; which accounts for the discrepancies in published copies of the same letter. His genius shines through all of them. Perhaps we might except some of those to Clarinda, which, it must be confessed, are rather sentimental; less like the frank, openhearted poet than the rest. One reason for this weakness is the fact that Clarinda seems to have been a religious bigot, and Burns, being much attached to her, tried to twist his own belief more into line with her absurd theology than the sober truth warranted.

There can be no doubt that Burns's popularity decreased after he went to Dumfries and became an exciseman. Not with the common people, who always "heard him gladly," and who hear him still as gladly as ever. But the upper-crust gentility soon concluded that it was not genteel to associate with a mere ploughman, and they gave him the cold shoulder! A truly marvelous sight for men and mice to look upon! One of his friends tells about meeting Burns on the street in Dumfries, on the night of a county ball, and how the gentry snubbed Burns, as they passed in their gala attire. I do not feel like taking the dead to task; nay, I do not think that it would be worth while to do so if the revellers were living. The same class who tried to look down on Robert Burns exist to-day, and behave as badly as the Dumfries gentry did a century ago. Why should *we* worry ourselves about them? They do not know any better. You cannot put a quart of milk into a pint pitcher by any known process, not even by the aid of prayer! The



gay butterflies of fashion flutter about for their brief day, possibly answering some purpose in the great plan of Nature, which, however, nobody yet has been able to find out.

"A man's a man for a' that" is the Scotch Marseillaise hymn, which has been ringing unheeded for a hundred years, and which will continue to ring until its honest demands are answered.

During the French revolution, Burns made a present of four small cannon to the Republic; but the Tory government seized them at Dover, and they would have turned him out of his little office, if it had not been for the interception of a political friend whose vote they needed.

Robert Burns had his faults, no doubt. I do not attempt to conceal the blemishes any more than the beauties. He was extravagantly fond of women; and he drank too much fiery liquor. He himself admits that his heart was like a tinder box. When he saw a beautiful woman, he could scarcely help falling in love with her, without regard to her rank or the reasonableness of the hasty attachment. There are facts in connection with his courtship of Highland Mary, Jean Armour, and Mrs. McLehose which are not creditable to him. He seems, at times, to have been carried off his feet with an amorous passion so strong that he could not resist it. Many of his best songs were the offspring of these fits; and it is safe to say that they would never have been written if Burns had been a model youth, after the Sunday-school pattern. You can take your choice whether it would have been better to lose the poetry or the passion.

Lord Byron, who was born about eight years after Burns died, and who also died young, in some respects resembled our great Scottish poet. Byron had the same intense hatred of cant and humbug which permeated the ploughman from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Both were ardent friends of human liberty. Both attacked superstition fearlessly, and both were denounced by the clergy as infidels. They refused to admit Byron's body to Westminster Abbey on that account.

Robert Burns was always a poor man, surrounded by circumstances which crippled his

great powers. That which puzzles me, and has puzzled a good many wiser folks, is how to account for the wonderful genius of the man, his constant industry while harrassed by poverty, and his sturdy independence under great temptation. I have no doubt that much genuine poetry is never written. It floats—a chaotic mass—in the brains of thousands who lack artistic power to give it form and birth. Nor is this unwritten poetry therefore useless. It lights up the individual character like a dim, distant star, which, while it sheds little light on our world, is all important to its own circle of worlds.

When we judge a man's character, it depends a good deal upon who is the judge as to the verdict; there are so many different standards. One man says, Does he go to church? Does he attend the weekly prayer meeting? Of course, that is not my standard. I ask, Is he selfish? Is he just and honest? Robert Burns was neither selfish nor greedy. Quite the opposite, in fact. He gave about half the proceeds of the Edinburgh edition of his poems to his brother, although he needed the money himself. John Ruskin says, "Whenever one hand meets another helpfully, that is the holy or mother church which ever is or ever shall be," and Robert Burns, though poor as poor could be, was ever holding out his helping hand to those as poor as himself.

This brings us to the point we started from—the explanation why his memory remains so fresh while so many other great names are almost forgotten. To be loved one must be lovable. There is no other way. Immense wealth and high rank cannot compete with love; that is the true philosopher's stone; the universal solvent. Robert Burns was a great poet; but his manliness, his independence, his free-thought, and his love of liberty, were even greater than his poetry. "A man's a man for a' that" is an epitome of his character. That line should have been engraved on his monument.

"Judge not ye whose thoughts are fingers

Of the hands that touch the lyre;  
Greenland has its mountain icebergs,  
Etna has its heart of fire,  
Calculation has its plummet,  
Self-control its iron rules,  
Genius has its sparkling fountains,  
Dullness has its stagnant pools.



“ As the sun from out the orient  
 Pours a wider, warmer light,  
 'Till he floods both earth and ocean,  
 Blazing from the zenith's height ;  
 So the glory of our poet,  
 In his deathless power serene,

Shines, as rolling time advances,  
 Warmer felt and wider seen.  
 First Doon's banks and braes contained it,  
 Then his country formed its span,  
 Now the wide world is its empire,  
 And its throne the heart of man.”  
 —[*Moir.*]

## XXXIII.—TO A COPY OF BURNS'S POEMS.

(*Found in the house of an Ontario farmer.*)

BY W. M. MACKERACHER.

LARGE Book, with heavy cover worn and old,  
 Wearing clear proof of usage and of years,  
 Thy edges yellow with their faded gold,  
 Thy leaves with fingers stained—perchance  
 with tears.

How oft thy venerable page has felt  
 The hardened hands of honourable toil !  
 How oft thy simple song had power to melt  
 The hearts of the rude tillers of the soil !

How oft has memory borne them back to see  
 The Scottish peasant at his work, and thou  
 Hast made them feel the grandeur of the free  
 And independent follower of the plough !

What careth he that his proud name hath  
 pealed  
 From shore to shore since his new race  
 began,  
 In humble cot and “ histie stibble-field ”  
 Who doth “ preserve the dignity of man ? ”

With reverend hands I lay aside the tome,  
 And to my lonely heart content returns ;  
 And in the stranger's house I am at home,  
 For thou dost make us brothers, Robert  
 Burns.

True Bard, that upwards of a hundred years  
 Hast waked these sacred passions in the  
 breast !  
 Who doth accuse thee ? Thou art with thy  
 peers ;  
 God hath exalted thee, for He knows best.

And thou, old Book, go down from sire to  
 son ;  
 Repeat the pathos of the poet's life ;  
 Sing the sweet song of him who fought and  
 won,  
 The outward struggle and the inward strife.

Go down, grand Book, from hoary sire to  
 son ;  
 Keep by the Book of Books thy wonted  
 place ;  
 Tell what the human man has felt and done,  
 And make of us and ours a noble race.

A race to scorn the sordid greed of gold,  
 To spurn the spurious virtue as the base,  
 Despise the shams that may be bought and  
 sold ;  
 A race of brothers and of men ; a race

To usher in the long-awaited time  
 Good men have sought and poets have  
 foretold.  
 When this bright world shall be the happy  
 clime  
 Of brotherhood and peace ; when men  
 shall mould

Their lives like His who walked in Palestine,  
 The truly human manhood thou dost show,  
 Leading them upward to the pure divine  
 Nature of God made manifest below.

*BURNSIANA*



# BURNSIANA:

*A COLLECTION OF LITERARY ODDS AND ENDS*

RELATING TO

## ROBERT BURNS

COMPILED BY

JOHN D. ROSS

AUTHOR OF "SCOTTISH POETS IN AMERICA,"  
AND EDITOR OF "CELEBRATED SONGS OF SCOTLAND," "ROUND BURNS' GRAVE," ETC.

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Vol. V.

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ALEXANDER GARDNER

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1895



“ ‘ HE’LL need no monument,’ said Fame ;  
‘ I’ll give him an immortal name ;  
When obelisks in ruin fall,  
Proud shall it stand above them all ;  
The daisy on the mountain side  
Shall ever spread it far and wide ;  
Even the roadside thistle-down  
Shall blow abroad his high renown.’ ”

“ Said Time, ‘ That name while I remain  
Shall still increasing honour gain,  
’Till the sun sinks to rise no more,  
And my last sand falls on the shore  
Of that still, dark, and unsailed sea,  
Which opens on Eternity.’ ”

—THOMAS MILLER.

THIS FIFTH VOLUME OF BURNSIANA IS DEDICATED TO

*John Muir, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.*  
(Author of "*Thomas Carlyle's Apprenticeship*," etc.),

AS A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP,  
AND IN APPRECIATION OF HIS NUMEROUS AND VALUABLE  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BURNS LITERATURE  
OF OUR TIME.



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# BURNSIANA.

## I.—THE POETRY OF BURNS.

*A Lecture by JAMES WILKIE, B.L., Musselburgh.*

THERE is a day, or more properly speaking, a night, in Scotland, in the dead of winter, when all nature is silent, and the burns choked with snow or wild with spate; a time

“When biting Boreas, fell and doure,  
Sharp shivers thro’ the leafless bow’r,  
And Phoebus gie’s a short liv’d glower  
Far South the lift,  
Dim dark’ning through the flaky show’r,  
Or whirling drift;”

A night when in city and town and hamlet, wherever Scotsmen be gathered together, there are jovial meetings and kindly glow of feeling, and much brotherhood, when the thoughts of those exiled in lands over sea go out with love and longing to this rugged little country of ours. Away in the Australian bush the strains of *Auld lang syne* go up to the cloudless sky of the southern night; amid Canadian snows; in the orange groves of Florida; in the wilds of the dark Continent; in whatever quarter of the globe the British tongue is spoken, there, for one short space at any rate, the dream of the poet is realized.

“That man to man the world ow’re  
Shall brithers be for a’ that.”

It is surely one of the strangest phenomena of literature that the personality of a humble ploughman, born in a mud walled cottage,—an auld clay biggin’, practically uneducated, a prey to fiercest passions, consumed indeed by his own soul, living most of his short life in discontent and at war with society, dying heart-broken at 37, should have power to

move the thoughts of widely scattered millions, to win from peer and peasant, from rustic and from scholar, a tribute of unstinted admiration and of love. Statesmen rise and pass away, and are forgotten almost as soon as the transient applause that greets their achievement. Conquerors like Napoleon live only in the pages of history, but this rude, unlettered poet, who sang because he must, lives on in the hearts and affections of men, and is honoured more and more as the years roll by.

And so we to-night like our fellow Scotsmen are met to worship at his shrine, to listen again to some of his immortal songs, to remember what manner of man he was in whose ears rang the wild, stirring, trumpet notes of *Scots wha hae* as he galloped through the storm over the Galloway moorland, who had pity in his great compassionate heart for ‘the owrie cattle’ and the ‘silly sheep,’ amid the wintry war, in whom the larger hope was strong enough for trust that even the deil himself might be restored to heaven at last.

Needless is it to do more than remind you of the surroundings amid which Robert Burns found himself on his entrance into the world on that wild winter day nearly a century and a half ago, when on the banks o’ Doon, not far from “Alloway’s auld haunted Kirk,” where Tam o’ Shanter, belated, saw that eldritch dance of witches,

“———a blast o’ Januar’ wind  
Blew hansel in on Robin.”

And so we shall let him describe it for himself in the famous song—

“There was a lad was born in Kyle.”

It was into a stern, austere household of the old Scottish Calvinistic type that the poet was born. A long hard struggle against poverty had intensified the silent, almost gloomy, reserve of his father; but his mother, Agnes Brown, whose grave is in Bolton churchyard, near Haddington, had a rich store of those old songs and ballads that in the good days lang syne, were sung and chanted by every ingle-neuk, songs and ballads handed down by oral tradition from hoar antiquity; now, alas! scarcely to be found save in more or less rare collections of ballad-poetry and minstrelsy. And thus, as with Sir Walter, so with Burns. He imbibed unconsciously a passion for those ancient lyrics with their sad sweet melodies, those

“——ballads of Scotland that thrill you,  
Straight from the heart to the heart.”

a passion that was to awake the ideal, and prove the solace of his stormy life.

And she, his mother, as she crooned by his cradle the weird sweet airs of the auld Scots songs, did she long “with all the longing of a mother” to know what the dim future held for her eldest born; had she any presage of the meteor-genius that was to flash across the lurid sky, to vanish ere a world prone to stone its prophets, had recognised that another of the immortals had been given it to reject?

“An’ dreamt she ever, as she sang to still  
His infant heart in slumber sweet and strong,  
That he, who silent lay the while, should fill  
Half the round world with song?”

“Yet so he filled it, and she lived to see  
The singer, chapleted with laurel, stand,  
Upon his lips that wondrous melody,  
Which thrilled his native land.”

We know how, later, when the family had moved to Mount Oliphant, the small farm on the uplands with the “poor and hungry soil,” where they were continually at the mercy of a hard and pitiless factor, and where the father combined with a few neighbours to engage a young man as teacher to his sons, that it was the volatile Gilbert who was looked upon as the genius. “All the mirth and liveliness

were with Gilbert,” says their tutor, “Robert’s countenance at that time wore generally a grave and thoughtful look.”

Yet it was the dull-eared boy to whom one tune sounds very much as another, who should fill

“Half the round world with song.”

The faculty lay dormant, waiting like the song-birds the vivifying voice of spring; but in the fulness of time that voice was heard, the floodgates of melody were opened, and there burst upon the sons of men those strains whose echoes still are ringing wherever they can understand the Scottish tongue.

Once again we may tell the familiar story as he himself told it. It was in his fifteenth year, when incessant toil had given that familiar stoop to the shoulders. “You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of the harvest. . . . My partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. . . . How she caught the contagion I cannot tell. . . . Indeed I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind so much with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart strings thrill like a *Æolian* harp; and especially why my pulse should beat such a furious rapture when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettle stings of thistles. Among her love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly, and it was her favourite reel which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine I could make verses like printed ones” (there were no poets’ corners in local newspapers in those days), “composed by men who read Greek and Latin; but my girl sang a song which was said to be composed by a country laird’s son, on one of his father’s maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I should not rhyme as well as he; for excepting that he could shear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself. Thus with me began love and poetry.”

The first song is rather a curiosity in its way, though not without merit, as for example—

"She dresses aye sae clean and neat,  
Baith decent and genteel,  
And then there's something in her gait,  
Gars ony dress look weel."

It is a favourite problem with novelists of a certain order whether one can love more than once. But poets are a privileged race. One of them has said, "The poet is in love always, and 'the poet, the lunatick, and the lover,' being according to Shakespeare, 'of one imagination all compact,' it is possibly true. So at least it was in the case of Burns. This 'hairst maiden' was but the first of a long succession of Jeans, and Annies, and Nannies, and Marys, Highland and otherwise, amid which one almost loses the sense of identity." "Not dames high and exalted, but lasses of the barn and of the byre, who had never been in higher company than that of the shepherds and ploughmen, or danced in a politer assembly than that of their fellow peasants, on a barn floor, to the sound of the district fiddle." "My heart was completely tender and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other," he says. But whatever the goddesses may have been, they had at least the honour of inspiring some of the finest of the world's love-lyrics, lyrics—

"Sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,  
And soft as their parting tear."

Most beautiful, perhaps, that swan-song of his life, which Mendelssohn so much admired that he composed for it a new air :—

"O wert thou in the cauld blast,  
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,  
My plaidie to the angry air,  
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee."

But the names throng thick—"O' a' the airts," "Ae fond kiss," and so on, and among the rest those four that we are now to hear,

"O my luve she's like a red, red rose."  
"O wert thou in the cauld blast."  
"Bonnie wee thing."  
"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon."

and in a higher and more humorous aspect, "Duncan Gray."

In that strange, wild, passionate career, there are startling contrasts. Up to this time he is, despite toil and poverty, happy. Life lies vague and mysterious before him; the world is his to conquer with his pen. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he

grows up, dreamy fancies hang like cloud cities around him; the curtain of existence is slowly rising in many-coloured splendour and gloom, and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path, and so he walks—

"In glory and in joy,  
Behind his plough upon the mountain side."

One can hardly believe that the same hand could pen verses unreadable in decent society, and write that inspired description of the best features of the old peasant life of Scotland, *The Cottar's Saturday Night*. Not without tears was it written, neither heard without tears by the simple folk who read it. For we know that when Burns was on a Highland tour with Nicol, the latter asked a boy, who was their guide, which of the poems he liked best. The reply is said to have been that he was entertained with *The twa dogs* and *Death and Dr Hornbrock*; "but," he added, "I like best the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, although it made me greet when my father had me to read it to my mother." Burns, with a sudden start, looked at his face intently, and patting his shoulder, said, "Well, my callant, I don't wender at your greeting at reading the poem, it made me greet more than once when I was writing it at my father's fireside."

It is a picture drawn from the experience of his own hearth. His father was such an one as George MacDonald in our own day might paint, as Carlyle, who knew such another, did paint from his own recollection, "A man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, . . . valuing knowledge, possessing some, and what is far better and rarer, openminded for more; a man with a kind insight and devout heart, reverent towards God; friendly, therefore, at once, and fearless towards all that God has made; in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and unfolded man." His words in his dying hour when he shadows forth his prophetic forebodings as to his brilliant son's future came only too true. At twenty-three Burns could illumine literature with the calm rapt glow of devotion in the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, he was not then capable of the dissolute verse that marks his hours of reckless despair. All too soon the clear light of



heaven was to give place to the gloom through which with ever more weary footsteps he was to stagger on, following wandering fires of sin.

The rest of the story is sad. The heroine of that most pathetic and beautiful song, written in the strain of the old ballads, that begins—

“Yestrene, when to the trembling string  
The dance gaed through the lighted ha,”

had rejected him. Melancholy and moody, he went to Irvine, fell into a wild roystering set, smugglers and rough-living adventurers, and so the descent into Avernus began. He is drawn also into the profitless and embittering arena of theological strife. What would we not give for his sake that he might exchange the experiences that called forth the biting satire and scorching sarcasm of Holy Willie's Prayer and its kindred for the young romance of the Lammas night, when—

“The sky was blue, the wind was still,  
The moon was shining clearly,”

and he wanders out to watch the barley rigs with Annie. Yet the divine amen abides with him through it all.

There is not time, nor is this the place to follow his career, to tell of his visits to Edinburgh, the rapturous applause, the meeting with one who was to be to the world at large at any rate, a greater than he, and who too should fill the world with song, should revive the ancient spirit of romance and chivalry, who should meet with misfortunes less, and yet, perhaps, greater than any Burns knew, because of the contrast with the fortunes of the time that went before and who should emerge from the ordeal only nobler and more heroic, a hero without shame and without reproach. Nor can we recall how the enthusiasm died into indifference, only to be rekindled when the poet had passed away beyond all the voices of Time.

But clearly through all alternations of fortune there burned the fire of his patriotism, of that devotion to this rugged little land of ours that inspires every Scotsman wherever fate may cast his lot. He was a compound of both Tory and Radical, a curious combination in the days when the French Revolution was shaking all the thrones and estab-

lished institutions of Europe. His father had had to leave his own country beyond the Tay because of his antagonism to the “Wee wee German Laidie,” and there seems to have been some lingering embers of devotion in the son to the ill-starred race, “every man of whom was every inch a king.”

These Jacobite songs want the fire and verve of those that sprang directly from Jacobite lips, but they are interesting as coming from the author of “A man's a man for a' that.”

The upheaval in France gave voice to the poets everywhere. Wordsworth has written:

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young, ah, that was very heaven.”

The most extravagant expectations prevailed, the wildest visions of new heavens and a new earth appeared to the gaze of the emotional everywhere, drunken as they were with the new wine of change. A fresh impetus was given to literature and the idea of Universal Brotherhood, of which to-day Walt Whitman is the leading exponent, was a thing hoped for as of instant realisation. Much has happened since then, and men have learned that “freedom broadens slowly down from precedent to precedent” abhorring cataclysmal paroxysms.

But at least the song that Burns wrote—

“A man's a man for a' that,”

may serve as an ideal if appreciated in the true sense and not taken in vain as is too often is by mischievous agitators to foster discontent.

But while the Jacobite songs and those that heralded the rise of the new democracy appeal to sections only, he could strike a note which thrilled to their inmost cords the hearts of his countrymen. In truth, despite the usage that he experienced from his native land, usage for much of which he was in great manner himself to blame, he was intensely patriotic. As much might, indeed, be said of every Scotsman. This *amor patriæ* is an essential of the genius of our literary men from the days of Blind Harry down through those of Dunbar, Gawan Douglas, Sir David Lindsay, Drummond of Hawthorndean, the great Sir Walter, and all the brilliant ones of the days, when *Black-*

wood and the *Edinburgh* were young to those of John Skelton and Louis Stevenson.

"The rough burr thistle spreading wide  
Amang the bearded bear,  
I turned the weeder-clips aside  
And spared the emblem dear.  
No nation, no station,  
My song e'er could raise  
A Scot still, but blot still,  
I knew no higher praise."

And so when Burns began to feel the strength of his song pinions his ideal hope was that he might be a great national bard.

" . . . A wish (I mind its power)  
A wish, that to my latest hour  
Will strangely heave my breast,  
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,  
Some useful plan or book could make,  
Or sing a song at least."

And had he written only "Scots wha hae," would not he have been so remembered? "Doubtless," to quote Carlyle, "the storm hymn was singing itself as he formed it through the soul of Burns; but, to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind! So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotsmen or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen."

And now, ere we conclude, for one brief glance at another strand in the genius of the poet. Wherever there is anything of the Celt there will be found something of the weird and demonic. Notably in Shakespeare, for example, where Dido stands alone upon the wild sea banks, a willow in her hand, and waves her lover to come again to Carthage. You find it too in the rudest clansman in the North, and a trace of it has come to Burns with his Jacobite blood. For who so well could paint the eerie rites of Hallowe'en. And what poem enjoys so

high a popularity as *Tam o' Shanter*, despite its shortcomings. For to me, at any rate, it seems weak beside that weird tale that Wandering Willie tells of Steenie Steenson's visit to the wicked Laird of Redgauntlet in Hades to get the rent receipt, and so prove his honesty. But it is full of rich colouring, and a certain homely humour, and there is nothing that suits Burns better than the description of a carousal and its results.

Thus in some slight measure we have glanced at the various phases of the poet's genius, and can appreciate the world homage he enjoys. We have seen again how his melody flows spontaneously from his heart, for like that of Scott, it is poetry all can appreciate. He soars into no ethereal region void of human interest as does Shelley, he is not hard to understand as is Browning, appeals not to the cultured alone like Matthew Arnold. His love songs are songs every lover would sing had he his genius, his war odes, those every patriot would thunder as he moves to battle for his native land. He has indeed attained to his ideal of National Bard. He had the vision and the faculty divine, could thrill every fibre of the Scottish nature from its deep piety to its pawky humour. And greatest service of all, where he found a national minstrelsy that for its words has been called a moral plague, he left us the old Scottish melodies, strong and sweet, set to words worthy of them. And if those oft quoted words of Fletcher of Saltoun be true in any degree, that if one but be allowed to make its songs, it matters not who makes a nation's laws, then surely we can forgive Burns all those vices that were but the defects of his virtues, for we cannot estimate the full extent of the debt we owe him.

## II.—BURNS AND HIS COUNTRYMEN.

*From the SCOTTISH LEADER, January 26, 1894.*

NEVER before, perhaps, were there more Burns Clubs in existence, and more Burns dinners eaten, than last night. It may be hoped that every item in the matter was not

equally on the rising scale; some elements which need not be mentioned could stand a little reduction without affecting the general success. In any case, this continued ex-

pansion of the fame of Burns is a phenomenon worth considering, whether we be led to it by foreign comment or not. The fidelity of the Scottish people to Burns is certainly anomalous in some respects. If there be any truth in the view that the national character is in the main prudent, stiff, hard-headed, and close-fisted, Burns is an odd laureate for it, as he was none of these things. He was temperamentally so different from the accepted Scotch type that there is some reason for leaning to the view that his stock was Celtic, though his father, for that matter, would pass very well for a douce Lowlander. We had better fall back, perhaps, on the view that no type sums up the whole nation; that alongside of the douce type in the Lowland stocks there is a pretty common type of greater nervous excitability and artistic endowment; and that in the same way there is an abundance of the douce type among Highlanders, who are popularly lumped together as Celtic. We really know little about the characteristics of race stocks, even as linguistically marked off, and much less about any "original" characteristics antecedent to the mixture of stocks in groups with one language. On the other hand, difference of characteristics need not prevent appreciation; and the modern Scottish nation needed a national poet so much that much worse faults than those of Burns would have been pardoned to one with such a gift of touching the heart of his countrymen. He gave voice to the reaction of the social man against the pressure of an ecclesiastical and a political system under which the social side of human nature was repressed.

Still, the feeling of anomaly remains, and it is part of the general anomaly of the relation of Burns to his countrymen that he has had no biographer at once copious, sympathetic, and satisfactory. His life has been written and commented by the prosaic Currie, the Tory Lockhart, the unsympathetic Shairp, the ranting, roving Blackie, and lately by the careful and clerical but unliterary Mr. Higgins, minister of Tarbolton. No one of these gentlemen sufficiently combines literary science and sympathy with literary faculty and sound literary judgment. If we set aside Alexander Smith's memoir as not

amounting to a biography proper, Lockhart on the whole comes nearest making a good book; but it was impossible for the editor of the *Quarterly Review* to handle the case of Burns with the amount of intellectual sympathy which a biographer should bring to his work. Carlyle's general laudatoriness is perhaps the most remarkable anomaly of all; and it is finally impossible to believe that Carlyle would have given to any but a Scotsman of his own family's rank in life, and of a previous generation, a tithe of the sympathy he gave to Burns in despite of so many antipathetic elements of character. It is no wonder that the elder Carlyle was averse to Burns: it is the attitude of the son that needs explanation. Finally, the unfavourable moral criticism of Mr. Stevenson is in its way just as anomalous, if we considered the moral standards which appear to satisfy Mr. Stevenson at least one of his works—"The Wreckers."

Yet withal the vogue of Burns increases all round; the Burns clubs multiply; the annual speeches are more and more carefully prepared. And why? Sooth to say, there are various reasons, not equally good. One is that the average literary taste in Scotland is not very cosmopolitan, and that there is a want of breadth and proportion in the average literary judgment. Another is that, after all, the Burns dinner comes but once a year; it means no study—not even a re-reading of Burns; and it is a very good opportunity for a social meeting. Growing sociability really counts for a good deal in the matter. But these cannot be the only reasons. Another thing that is on the increase besides sociability is the democratic and the humanitarian spirit, and that must count for much in Burns's popularity—for more, probably, than literary appreciation; because, admirable as Burns's best work is, he did much which was inferior, and which is yet widely acclaimed. It is his spirit, his ideal, his human message, that gives him his surest hold on the minds of his race. And yet, here again we come to anomaly; for among the professed admirers of Burns are men who show in their relation to affairs very little of his spirit, very little care for his political ideals. We have Lord Wolmer, for instance, presiding at the dinner



of the Ninety Burns Club at Edinburgh ; and there can be no doubt that many a determined Tory last night, in Scotland and all the world over, drank to the "immortal memory." This time the anomaly must just be squarely set down to human inconsistency. If any man was opposed to the spirit of Toryism and so-called "Unionism," Burns was. His democratism, his sympathy with struggling nationalities, his superiority to mere national prejudice, comes out alike in his poetry and his life. At a dinner at which Pitt's health was proposed, he got into trouble by proposing "The health of a greater and better man, George Washington." At another dinner he got into worse trouble by proposing the toast "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause"—a sentiment odious to Toryism. The sending of the carronades to the French Convention was not very wise, but it showed how his heart and his head lay. His latest biographer comments in a very old-world and unenlightened style on Burns's relation to the French Revolution, which will one day be considered well worth remembering to his credit. But his Tory admirers apparently do not even ask themselves what they think of Burns's politics. They do not seem even to take the trouble of founding on his general approval of the British Constitution. They set their faces against the aspirations of the Irish

people all the year round, pronouncing them unfit for self-government, and drink to Burns's health once a year as they might to any national institution. They combine a love for coercion with a profession of esteem for a man who in his own day risked his small fortunes by repudiating the methods of Pitt. There can be no doubt that had these latter day admirers of the poet lived in his time, or he in theirs, they would have reviled his opinions, and seen small good in his verses. The writer of "Scots Wha Hae" was no "Unionist." Colonel Wauchope's way of connecting Burns with present-day life is to suggest that were he alive to-day he would write a sonnet on naval extension. We very much doubt it. He was the first man to resent a threat of invasion ; but he cared more for human brotherhood than for the nominal command of the seas. And it may be doubted whether, were he now alive, he might not have ere this written verses on Lord Wolmer, apropos of a certain Parliamentary episode. It is well, certainly, that men of clashing political opinions should be able to meet sociably, at a banquet or otherwise. But to turn the life and work of Burns, of all men, and in these of all days, into a pretext for putting aside politics, as if the ideals and the sympathies of Burns counted for nothing, is an odd way of claiming to show a serious interest in him.

### III.—BURNS'S GRAVE.

BY EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

STOP, mortal ! Here thy brother lies—

The poet of the poor.

His books were rivers, woods, and skies,

The meadow and the moor ;

His teachers were the torn heart's wail,

The tyrant and the slave,

The street, the factory, the jail,

The palace—and the grave !

Sin met thy brother everywhere !

And is thy brother blamed ?

From passion, danger, doubt and care

He no exemption claimed.

The meanest thing, earth's feeblest worm,

He feared to scorn or hate ;

But, honouring in a peasant's form

The equal of the great—

He blessed the steward, whose wealth makes

The poor man's little more ;

Yet loathed the haughty wretch that takes

From plundered labour's store.

A hand to do, a head to plan,

A heart to feel and dare—

Tell man's worst foes, here lies the man

Who drew them as they are.



## IV.—BURNS AND SHENSTONE.

WE have it on the authority of Wordsworth that "Poets in their youth begin in gladness, but thereof comes in the end despondency or madness." When Wordsworth thus formulated the result of his reflections on the poetic life, Burns was one of the poets of whom he had been particularly thinking. But, while it is true that something very like despondency and madness beclouded the life of Burns at its close, it is unhappily not quite so clear that his career as a poet commenced in gladness. No doubt he rejoiced with a keen delight in the exercise of his rare poetical faculty—he has himself sung of "the rapture of the poet" at the moment when "fancy lightened in his ee"; but the delight was hardly at the first, as an examination of his earlier efforts in the craft of verse-making sufficiently reveals. In these we find a significant proportion of melancholy moods, for which the misery and monotony of his circumstances are usually made to account. Of the first twenty-five of his recorded pieces, the larger half are full of a genuine sadness which sorts ill with one's conceptions of a youthtime of gladness and hope. They are elegies on the inequalities of fortune, the frailty of life, and the sinfulness of human nature. His twenty-third year seems to have been a period of exceptional gloom. The poetical fruit of that year, some six or eight pieces in all, has a strong tinge of Calvinism. Even of the poems of his apprenticeship that are not fairly to be described as gloomy, not a few have the ring of a bravely-assumed but hollow mirth. So that, taking his earlier poems altogether, one is not far wrong in saying that Burns's poetical career, which ended in gloom, began also in a gloom which did not readily give way. To most people an adequate explanation of this gloom is to be found in the poet's circumstances. Burns himself had a somewhat different explanation. True, he characterised the condition of his early life, in a well-known retrospective letter, as "the cheerless gloom of the hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley slave;" but he knew that such a life did not determine his brother Gilbert, for example, to the melancholy views

which he himself entertained. He believed, and he seems to have cherished the belief, that he was the victim of a constitutional melancholy; and he appears to have found at last some consolation in knowing that it was common to the poetic temperament, if indeed it was not an essential part of it.

His natural predisposition to melancholy, which the "*angustæ res domi*" must have at least tended to foster, had an important influence upon the reading and thought of young Burns from the very first. Here it is necessary to discriminate between the kind of reading to which he was directed by the advice and example of his father and that to which, when the years of his pupilage were over, he turned of his own freewill and choice. His father's bent was to divinity, moral philosophy, and the exact sciences, and these were subjects of evening study more or less systematic in the farmhouse of Mount Oliphant, as well as of frequent discussion out of doors at intervals of leisure in the work of the field. The text-books, so to say, for those studies were Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, Taylor's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, and Euclid's *Elements*. They were read and pondered by the future poet chiefly because they were recommended by his father. But when he was free to follow the bent of his own mind and to choose his own reading—a freedom which he entered upon somewhere about his sixteenth year—he turned instinctively to poetry, and particularly to that kind of it which expresses religious or philosophical reflections in elegiac strains. William Shenstone was an early favourite; Blair, Gray, and Young were also soon discovered; and they remained, it may almost be said, life-long friends. It is scarcely inaccurate to describe these authors as writers of elegy; two of them employed the recognised elegiac measure; and though Blair and Young expressed their mournful reflections in blank verse, they may be regarded as essentially elegiac poets. They were, at or near the outset of his poetical career, Burns's favourite authors. There is evidence, both plain and implied, that he studied them deeply and sympathetically.

They inspired no inconsiderable amount of his thought ; and, while they were not seldom suggestive of new trains of thought and feeling, they were occasionally contributory of poetical phrases and poetical situations to the verse of Burns. It is the purpose of the present paper to notice Burns's more important references to Shenstone, and to point out the nature and extent of his indebtedness to that once famous and now, perhaps, too neglected English poet.

It was in the village of Kirkoswald, whither he had been sent in his seventeenth year to learn land-surveying, that Burns first made acquaintance with Shenstone's poems. "They were," he announced, "an important addition to his reading." Eight years afterwards Shenstone was still first on the list of his favourite authors. Writing from Lochlea, in January 1783, to his schoolmaster, Mr. John Murdoch, then settled in London, he declares—"My favourite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as Shenstone, particularly his *Elegies*." Three years later his opinion of the merits of Shenstone was still high—so high that in his interesting preface to the *Kilmarnock* edition of his poems he makes direct mention of him as "that celebrated poet whose divine *Elegies* do honour to our language, our nation, and our species. Even after his arrival in Edinburgh, at a time when he was patronised by "The Lounger," and lionised by the first literary society of his country, he wrote with a strange modesty that he was not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame in a language "where Shenstone and Gray had drawn the tear." And later on, in his charming letters to Peggy Chalmers and Mrs. Dunlop, we come across now a quotation from Shenstone's prose, and now an admiring reference to his poetical genius.

Burns's opinion of Shenstone was his own, and his admiration, so frequently and so warmly expressed, was undoubtedly genuine. At the same time, he was by no means ignorant of the high place which contemporary criticism assigned to Shenstone, nor of the particular qualities for which the poet was praised. Beattie was well known to Burns, and Beattie, in his attack on Churchill in 1765, had represented "all the Loves and gentler Graces" as mourning over Shenstone's "recent urn." It would be easy to show that

Burns's individual opinion of Shenstone was strengthened by his knowledge of Beattie's criticism, and that the language of Beattie was lingering in his memory when, as in the fine passage in "The Vision," he described the art of Shenstone in the grace of its pathetic touch as utterly beyond the range of his own genius.

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,  
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow,  
Or wake the bosom-melting throe  
With Shenstone's art,  
Or pour with Gray the moving flow  
Warm on the heart."

It is worth while comparing with this the following lines of Beattie—upon which, it may be noticed in passing, a powerful passage in Coleridge's "Monody on the Death of Chatterton" is modelled :—

"Is this the land where Gray's unlabour'd art  
Soothes, melts, alarms, and ravishes the heart ?  
While the lone wanderer's sweet complainings flow  
In simple majesty of manly woe.

Is this the land, o'er Shenstone's recent urn  
Where all the loves and gentler Graces mourn?" etc.

The closeness of Burns's study of Shenstone, and the nature and extent of his obligations to him will be best shown by a citation or comparison of parallel passages taken from both authors. Take first the poetical situation and scenery represented in "Man was Made to Mourn." It is an evening of chill November, and the poet wanders forth along the banks of Ayr. He meets an old man with hoary hair, who thus addresses him :—

"Young stranger, whither wandrest thou ?  
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain ?" etc.

In the background of this scene are "moors extending wide." Turn now to the seventh of Shenstone's series of *Elegies*. It is a stormy evening of autumn, and the poet strays by Orwell's winding banks. He meets a venerable figure with white locks, who thus accosts him :—

"Stranger, amidst this pealing rain  
Benighted, lonesome, whither wouldst thou stray ?  
Does wealth or power thy weary step constrain ?" etc.

In the background of this scene are "distant heaths." Here it will be observed, the situation is very similar, while the language quoted is almost identical.

In another passage of "Man was Made to Mourn" occur the lines—

"Look not alone on youthful prime  
Or manhood's active might."

The latter has been obviously adopted consciously or more probably unconsciously, from Shenstone's Eleventh Elegy—

"Not all the force of manhood's active might," etc.

A recollection of this same Eleventh Elegy, mingling in the poet's memory with echoes of Gray's Ode on Eton, will be found in the last stanza of Burns's Ode on Despondency. "O, enviable early days!" says Burns, recalling the period of childhood :—

"Ye tiny elves, that guiltless sport  
Like linnets in the bush,  
Ye little know the ills ye court  
When manhood is your wish."

The lines were penned in 1786; and there is a peculiar pathos in this young man of twenty-seven warning the young from his own experience of the tears and fears of dim-declining age. Shenstone, however, had already written :—

"O youth! enchanting stage, profusely blest!  
Then glows the breast, as opening roses fair,  
More free, more vivid than the linnet's wing," etc.

It is unnecessary to give the full quotation, but the moralising is in the same strain precisely.

Again, most readers of Burns are familiar with the rather strange expression "dear idea," which occurs not less than thrice in various parts of his poetry—in the Epistle to Davie, "Her dear idea brings relief and solace to my breast;" in his early lyrical fragment on Jean, "Her dear idea round my heart should tenderly entwine;" and in "Sappho Rediviva," "Your dear idea reigns." The expression occurs in Shenstone, but it would be hazardous to say that it was absolutely original and his own creation. In his Ninth Elegy one may read—"Restore thy dear idea to my breast."

Again, the opening lines of Burns's "Sonnet on hearing a thrush sing in January" seem to have completely caught the echo of a couplet in the Sixth Elegy of Shenstone. The sonnet begins :—

"Sing on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,  
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain."

The couplet of the elegy expresses the same sense in similar words—

"Sing on, my bird, the liquid notes prolong:  
Sing on my bird, 'tis Damon hears the song."

If we turn to "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and read it alongside of "The Schoolmistress," we shall find that in respect of measure, theme, and style of both treatment and language, it was modelled scarcely less after the manner of Shenstone than according to the pattern of Fergusson's "Farmer's Ingle." Unlike the latter, but like "The Schoolmistress," it maintains the perfect form of the Spenserian stanza. It would take up too much space to indulge in quotations here, but the student of Burns may profitably compare the stanza of "The Cottar" which commences "They chant their artless notes in simple guise," and the two succeeding stanzas, with stanzas xii. and xiv. of "The Schoolmistress"—not for sentiment but for style. He will scarcely fail to perceive a suggestive likeness. On the one hand, there is an enumeration of psalm tunes; on the other, an enumeration of garden herbs. The enumeration in both cases proceeds on the same lines. There is, further, in the dame's singing of Shenstone a very possible suggestion of the cottar's reading of Burns. The passage

"Sweet melody! to hear her then repeat  
How Israel's sons beneath a foreign king," etc.

may have inspired

"The priest-like father reads the sacred page,  
How Abram was the friend of God on high," etc.

And none will deny that the advice of the dame to her infant charge might have formed part of the "admonition due" of the cottar-father to the "younkers" of his family :—

"And warned them not the fretful to deride,  
But love each other dear, whatever them betide."

That such advice was given is indeed implied, for—

"With joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet,  
And each for other's welfare kindly spiers."

The mysterious elegy, "the work of some hapless son of the muses," which Burns presented in his own manuscript to Mrs. Dunlop, should perhaps be noticed here, if only for his own estimate of it, as being in point of senti-

ment "no discredit even to that elegant poet," though clothed in a language admittedly inferior to Shenstone's. If it be Burns's own work, which is on the whole very doubtful, one might be excused for regarding it as descriptive of his sorrow and solitude of soul at the grave of Highland Mary. The scene of the following verses may be imagined to be the West Churchyard at Greenock, where Mary Campbell is believed to lie buried, and

the time a sorrowful hour of unavailing regret immediately preceding his projected emigration to the West Indies :—

" At the last limits of our isle,  
Washed by the western wave,  
Touched by thy fate a thoughtful bard  
Sits lonely by thy grave.  
Pensive he eyes before him spread  
The deep, outstretching vast :  
His mourning notes are borne away  
Upon the rapid blast."

## V.—ROBERT BURNS.

BY DR. A. M. McCLELLAND, *Toronto, Canada.*

SOME names are born to live for aye,  
And some are born to die,  
And some are born, one finds it hard,  
To tell the reason why.  
And some there are, who sing their lays  
In melodies most glorious,  
'Mong such a throng, we have to name  
Our poet BURNS victorious.

He sang of love—the sweetest love,  
In strains of such perfection,  
That "Caledonia, stern and wild,"  
Was filled with the infection—  
He sang of daisies, mice and men,  
And merry maids most winsome,  
Of witches, warlocks, bogles dire  
And fearful deils most grinsome.

He was a child of Nature born,  
As he himself hath said it,  
No skill had he that's college bred,  
We often too have read it—

He was no reckless, raving chiel,  
That Scotch folk call a ranter,  
The "frenzy fine" came streaming out,  
He named it "Tam O'Shanter."

He sang of Doon, bright lovely Doon,  
Its banks and braes enchanting,  
Of flowers rare and ladies fair,  
And lads that went gallanting—  
Sweet Afton's streams were dear to him,  
Mary, he kent fu' brawlie,  
My Nannie O, with Auld Langsyne,  
And bonnie Annie Laurie.

In Scotia's heart without a peer,  
In Summerland most vernal,  
He'll live till earthly music's lost  
In rhapsodie eternal,  
Like stars that in the azure shine,  
With ever constant glory,  
His name shall shine in distant times,  
And be an endless story.

## VI.—ANECDOTES OF CARLYLE AND BURNS.

BY JOHN MUIR, *F.S.A., SCOT.*

THE late Rev. William Howie Wylie is a name well-known to those acquainted with the literary characters of the West of Scotland, as the founder, and down to his death the editor, of the *Christian Leader*, which is now conducted by his son. Mr. Wylie was a most genial man, and a conversationalist of no mean order, whose talk was brimful of anecdotes, and flavoured with a literary aroma,

much appreciated by those who enjoyed his friendship.

To the world at large, he is perhaps better known as the author of a most charming life of Carlyle which passed through several editions. It is a book to which I am indebted for many agreeable hours spent in



perusing its pages; and one which, despite its faults, I have read oftener than any other life of Carlyle, not excepting even Professor Froude's authoritative work and the Reminiscences of the Sage himself. Besides, I am indebted to Mr. Wylie's book for the confirmation of a theory I have long held with regard to Carlyle's early life and writings, regarding which I last year published a *brochure*, through Mr. Robert McClure of Glasgow.

From Mr. Wylie's book I have extracted the following anecdotes regarding Carlyle and Burns, which I think will interest the reader.

#### CARLYLE AND THE POET'S NEPHEW.

It is, perhaps, not unworthy of note that one of Carlyle's school-fellows at Annan was Thomas Burns, a nephew of the poet, who subsequently became parish minister of Monkton, in Ayrshire, and died at Dunedin, where he was Free Church minister, and Chancellor of the University of Otago, in 1871. While at Monkton he betrayed a dislike to any mention of his illustrious uncle being made in his presence. The good man came to know better as the years went by; and at the antipodes he enjoyed the lustre that was reflected upon him from the chief of Scottish song. It was probably during the Annan days that Carlyle went to Dumfries to see the grave of Burns. This glimpse of his boyhood, a picture that must henceforth be treasured in the Scottish heart, he gave to an American visitor a few years ago, during a walk from Chelsea to Piccadilly. He told of his early admiration of Burns—how he used to creep into the churchyard of Dumfries, when a little boy, and find the tomb of the poet, and sit and read the simple inscription by the hour. "There it was," said he, "in the midst of poor fellow-labourers and artisans, and the name—Robert Burns!" At morn, at noon, at eventide, he loved to go and read that name. These were thoughts dimly suggested to the mind of the boy, that quickened, and grew, till at length, in his manhood, they found expression in what was the first—and seems likely to be the last—worthy and all-sufficing exposition of the life and works of the Scottish Bard. Page 40.

#### BURNS, THE SCOTTISH PRODIGAL SON.

It may not be out of place here to note that Dean Stanley, in his entertaining *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland*, describes Burns as "the prodigal son of the Church of Scotland," and alleges that "the kindly and genial spirit of the philosophic clergy and laity saved him from being driven, by the extravagant pretensions of the popular Scottish religion, into absolute unbelief." The lecturer does not seem to have known the fact, that what the poet really thought of "the philosophic clergy" of the Establishment were placed beyond all doubt by the selection he made at Dumfries, when he took seats for himself and his family in the Secession Kirk, of which the Rev. William Inglis was pastor. When Burns was asked by one, in a taunting tone, why he condescended to listen to the preaching of a seceder, he replied, "I go to hear Mr. Inglis because he preaches what he believes, and practices what he preaches." We have been told by a grandson of Mr. Inglis, of a circumstance not noticed in any of the biographies of Burns. Mr. Inglis was the Christian pastor who attended the poet on his death-bed; and to him Burns "expressed the deepest penitence for his immorality, and for his profane and licentious writings." This fact our informant had from his father, who, when a youth, frequently saw Burns. Mr. Inglis, though he had been settled in his ministerial charge at Dumfries early in 1765, performed all its duties till 1810, and was able to preach till the time of his death, in 1826. Page 47.

#### BURNS'S SONGS.

On another day Carlyle visited a school on the Links at Kirkcaldy, and the master, anxious to show the children at their best before their distinguished visitor, set them to sing. Carlyle asked that they should sing something by Burns; but the master not having practiced the children in Burns, had to ex use himself and them as well he could. Carlyle left exclaiming, "Scotch children, and not taught Burns's songs! Oh, dear me!" Page 347.

## VII.—JUDGE COLSTON ON BURNS.

*Address Delivered before the South Edinburgh Burns Club. Jan. 25, 1894.—Reprinted from the  
"North British Advertiser and Ladies Journal."*

It has often been the fate of a great man, ay, and a good man too, to have his detractors, and to be misunderstood and misrepresented. Envy and malice and misrepresentation are to be found anywhere and everywhere. Sneerers and scorners, as well as "particularly guid folk," are to be met with at all times and in all societies. They never fail to underrate the talents of any author who writes severely regarding the "prevailing customs of the day," and does not square his views with those of a narrow prejudice. Such an author is sure to come in for a large share of their ill-concealed spite. Burns, in his day, was no exception to the rule. He was fiercely denounced by the bigots of his time. Even after his death, the excellent and humane maxim—*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*—was not even observed. His detractors could not deny his talent or his genius, but sneeringly said that he "might have done better"—in fact, that he had prostituted his gifts. It is satisfactory, however, to know that, as years roll on, that peculiar class of individuals is somehow becoming a fast reducing body, and that a better and more humane, because a more thoroughly honest and truthful, view is now rapidly gaining ground—viz., a genuine appreciation of the kindliness of heart, honesty of purpose, and beautiful, patriotic sentiment which without doubt pervade the poetry of Scotland's greatest bard. In order thoroughly to appreciate the merits of any man, it is requisite that one should bear in mind the customs of the times in which he lived, and the habits of the society in which he moved. It would be utterly unfair to contrast Burns and his habits with those which obtain at the present day. In the days of Burns there were no daily press, no telegrams, no railways, no great amount of culture except among the favoured few; no electoral privileges for the poor man; or even in many instances for the well-to-do man; no great independence among the working classes, who were looked upon as serfs; no broad, catholic spirit, such as now exists in

reference to matters of religion. All these things could not fail to exercise a powerful influence on a man endowed by Providence with a great literary taste, and imbued with the noble spirit of a manly independence. Robert Burns was essentially a *social* man. Hence he was to be found along with his cronies in the tap-room of the village inn, enjoying that social intercourse which, in those days, Lords of Session, advocates, Writers to the Signet, professors of the University, and many other distinguished men so thoroughly appreciated when they met together in the celebrated taverns of the Modern Athens, where they usually held their high-jinks, and where they so much enjoyed the feast of reason and the flow of soul! It was pre-eminently an age of tavern frequenting. The late Dr. Robert Chambers, in his "Traditions of Edinburgh," says, "Tavern dissipation, now so rare amongst the respectable classes of the community, formerly prevailed in Edinburgh to an incredible extent, and engrossed the leisure hours of all professional men, scarcely excepting the most stern and dignified. No rank, class, or profession formed an exception to the rule. When Robert Burns came to Edinburgh to superintend the printing of the first edition of his poems, he was introduced to one of those clubs, called 'The Crochallen Fencibles,' by William Smellie, the printer, the translator of Buffon's 'Natural History,' and one of the founders of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The Hon. Henry Erskine, Lord Newton, Lord Gillies, and many other celebrated men had been members of the corps. A member of the body, in accordance with the usual practice, was, on the evening of Burns's admission, pitted against the Scottish bard in a contest of irony and wit; and Burns afterwards confessed that he had 'never been so abominably thrashed in all his life.' All this was done with the utmost good-humour, and Burns was constrained to say that 'he had never been so delighted at any convivial meeting.'" These, then,

were the habits of society at the time, and Burns would have been more than human if, considering his social feelings or failings, he had not been carried away by the prevailing customs of the day. In truth, it is to the fact of Robert Burns being a social man that we are indebted to him for the grand amen or doxology of all social gatherings—"Should auld acquaintance be forgot." But Burns was not only a social man, he was essentially a *patriotic* man, and dearly loved old Scotland. Many proofs of this are to be found in his poems and songs. Perhaps there is none which causes his patriotism to rise higher and glow more brightly than

"Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to victory."

Along with his patriotism, Robert Burns was a man of independent judgment and feeling. He despised to be fawned upon by the rich, and wished to be judged by his own merits. He looked upon the mere scions of rank with the most profound contempt, as being almost unworthy of any consideration except to be spurned. This was no doubt owing to the treatment which the poorer classes received in those days from those above them. Take this for example :—

"See yonder poor, o'erlaboured wight,  
So abject, mean, and vile,  
Who begs a brother of the earth  
To give him leave to toil ;  
And see his lordly fellow-worm  
The poor petition spurn,  
Unmindful though a weeping wife  
And helpless offspring mourn."

But while Burns was a man of independent thought and character, he was also like all true heroes, one whose inmost heart glowed with tenderness and pity. He is engaged with his plough, and he suddenly turns up a mouse's nest, which causes the little creature to fly for life, and him to indite the lines beginning :—

"Wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie."

Or, again, he is similarly engaged, and he turns down one daisy with the plough, and this fact leads him to discourse on the

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r."

But Robert Burns was essentially a religious

man. Having thoroughly dissected Scottish life and character, he came irresistibly to the conclusion that the religious life of his peasant countrymen was the grand secret of his country's greatness. In the "Cottar's Saturday Night" that life is most admirably depicted. The heads of the household are present discharging their respective duties. The reception-room for all is the kitchen with its "clean hearth-stane." There are little children there who are "toddlin' oot an' in," and there are older children also who arrive with their cronies, and there are bashful lovers too, who are introduced into the family circle. There is gossip freely indulged in, and the younger portion get a lesson as to their duty. There is business spoken of, as to horses, ploughs, and kye. Then comes on the supper, a plain supper of which all partake—"The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food." But there the evening is not ended, and the assembly does not disperse. There is a duty still to be discharged—"the worship of God." Burns then proceeds to describe the service, how they sing a psalm or hymn, with a chapter read and appropriate remarks made by the father ; how they kneel before heaven's eternal King, and the head of the household prays for all those under his roof, without any strain of sacerdotal pomp, but in his own natural way and language. He then describes the happy parting of the company, and reflecting on such a gathering he goes on thus to moralise :

"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,  
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad ;  
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,  
An honest man's the noblest work of God !"

But while Robert Burns showed how he looked upon the Scottish religious life as a most important factor in forming the religious character of Scotsmen, and in making them men in the best and truest sense of the word, he himself was brought from time to time near enough to the Fountain of Grace as to show that he was no sceptic, no scoffer, but one who had the germs of religion deeply implanted in his heart of hearts. It may be said there is no recognition of the philosophy of the plan of salvation in all his writings, which is now accepted by the Christian Churches as the basis of a religious man's be-



lief and hope for the future. That there was true and genuine repentance there cannot be a doubt; that there was hope through the all goodness of a Heavenly Father for mercy and clemency, though His erring human child had sinned, is also made obvious. But if there was not found what the orthodox Church regards as the cardinal doctrine of religion, we must fall back upon the system of religion as it was practised in those days, upon the sincerity or insincerity of the clergy, and the effects of which all this produced upon the conscience of an honest man. There is no doubt but the religious life of Ayrshire in the poet's time was a scandal to religion. Burns's "Holy Fair," his "Death and Dr. Hornbook," "The Ordination," "The 'Calf,'" and his "Address to the Deil," are poems which possibly it would have been better for his memory that they had never been written. But take them as they are, what are they at best, or even worst, but a clever satire of life as it appeared to Burns at the time, and which possibly served as a scathing rebuke to those who were the actors in the religious pharasaism, hypocrisy, cant, and superstition, which were strangely and wonderfully compacted with the libertine and libidinous practices of the period? That Robert Burns fell often into temptation and sin nobody will deny. But it is human to err. In this respect, he was but another example of poor frail humanity, as was to be found in one who was called "the man after God's own heart," the Psalmist David, who, referring to the enormity of his sins, and confessing these before his Heavenly Father, exclaimed—"I was as a beast before Thee." That Burns wrote many verses which he never desired the world to see, may be accepted without saying. It is the penalty due to greatness, that every scrap of his handwriting is now so much prized, that large prices are given in the auction market for such, and the written contents are speedily given forth to the world. There is no man here present that would like to see all his thoughts or his writings displayed before a curious and a critical public, and yet this is the penalty which genius has to pay. Speaking of the price now given for Burns's MSS., it may be remarked in passing

that the sheets of Burns's handwriting, which were consigned to the kindling of office fires, and still more ignoble purposes, in Smellie's Printing House, in 1786, by the devils in the establishment, would have made the fortunes of twenty autograph collectors in the present day. Verily, the estimation of the poet was very different in 1786-7 from what it is in this year of grace 1894. Robert Burns was a great admirer of the female character and beauty, and often made those the subjects of his song. Many examples might be quoted, such as the verses from "Blythe, blythe, and merry was she," "My Nannie's Awa'," or "I dearly Love my Jean." I have sought in these somewhat discursive remarks to bring before you to-night some of the chief characteristics of Scotland's greatest bard. Perhaps amid all his qualities of head and heart, the matter dearest to his soul was to assert the true individual test of real character in man, and to claim that he should be judged by such a standard. That is best shown in his great song, "A man's a man for a' that." A question has recently arisen whether Sir Walter Scott or Robert Burns was the greatest Scotsman. The matter in dispute has been referred to so high an authority as the present Premier, Mr. Gladstone, who has pronounced in favour of Sir Walter Scott. There is a great deal that may be said in support of this view. But there is as much that may in all truthfulness be said against it. The two men cannot very well be compared. They occupied totally different spheres, and brought about different results. The truth may be shortly stated in this one sentence—Scott made Scotland, but Burns made Scotsmen. Sir Walter Scott was successful in gathering up all the legends of bygone ages, and reproducing these at a time when, but for his ingenious foresight, they might have been for ever lost to the annals of Scottish history. He gave these to the public in the most fascinating of all forms, as a novel, or a fairy-tale, where he makes the more illustrious characters pass before the mind's eye, as if one knew and believed in their very existence, exactly as he has reproduced them. He also wrote Scottish history in so charming a manner as to make his "Tales of a Grandfather" at once rich with anecdote in a style



fitted to amuse and instruct—to make the reader feel that true history in its strictest and most absolute sense seemed to partake of the nature of romance. His matchless pen and indomitable enterprise portrayed to the world districts of our native land which were then only known to and traversed by the more adventurous and romantic of our fellow-men. These districts of late years—thanks to Sir Walter Scott's published works and the development of the railway system—have become the regular resort of travellers from all parts of the world. It is well that it is so. In them abound some of the grandest and most magnificent productions of Nature's Architect—the hoary mountain—the moss-covered heath—the aged forest—the solitary lake—in which the traveller cannot fail to imbibe a proportionable greatness of soul and enlargement of sentiment; in which

“ Each cliff, and headland, and green promontory,  
Graven with records of the past,  
Excites to hero-worship.”

It was otherwise with Burns. He sought another sphere for the outcome of his genius. He spoke, and most eloquently and effectively too, to the hearts, and understandings, and noblest aspirations of his fellow-countrymen in the race for manly independence and honour. One hundred years after Scott died, a great centenary meeting and festival were held in Edinburgh. It was largely and influentially attended; but there has been no attempt at another such gathering. Whereas, on the other hand, all over the wide world, where Scotsmen are to be found, on this very night, there are gathered together social meetings in honour of Scotland's national bard. What do such gatherings mean? What do they proclaim? Is it aught else than this—that the kindly, yet manly, and patriotic feelings which animated Robert Burns have a sympathetic response in every true Scottish bosom? There are various spheres of national education. The pulpit necessarily occupies the highest place, be-

cause of the very solemnity of those sacred and eternal thoughts which it is designed to inculcate among mankind. But it too often happens that it does not possess that influence for good on society at large which ought to be looked for. Ethical writers desire by their contributions to literature to cultivate a standard of pure morals; but they too fail in obtaining a lasting hold upon the community. Historians may write history with all the eloquence of a Lord Macaulay, or all the fascination of a Sir Walter Scott; but they do not largely impress the public mind. Of all the ways by which a people may be impressed, and even inspired, commend me to the song-writer of a country. The very versification of his thoughts, and the manner in which these are conveyed in the “sweet pure melody,” act as a charm upon the individual. There are two faculties brought into play at the same time—the memory of the understanding and the memory of the ear. The former may occasionally fail. The latter rarely does so. And the two combined work out a wonderful effect in moulding the national character. A meeting such as we have had to-night, or such as is taking place all over the world where Scotsmen dwell, is not of mere mushroom growth—it is the genuine forth-flowing of heart-felt sympathy with the sentiments and writings of our great national bard. So long as the heroic deeds of dear old Scotland's sons, on behalf of liberty and independence, are cherished with a truly patriotic spirit; so long as the thistle wags her head upon the Scottish mountains as an emblem of power; so long as Scotia's fountains sing of freedom, as their clear, crystal waters go dancing down her glens; so long as the heath and the blue-bells decorate her grassy knolls and dells; so long as a spirit of manly independence and freedom are the leading characteristics of the people;—even so long will the name of Burns be revered, his memory cherished, and his songs sung and appreciated in every social gathering of leal-hearted Scotsmen.

## VIII.—A DESCENDANT OF BURNS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

A CORRESPONDENT forwards the *Adelaide Observer* the following:—"A Scotchman would go a long distance to see a relic of Scotland's bard. Very precious in his eyes is something belonging to Robert Burns. Much more precious, however, is the sight of the face of one in whose veins runs the blood of so admired a son of his native land. Mrs. A. V. Burns Scott is the great-granddaughter of Robert Burns. She is the daughter of the late Dr. Hutcheson. Her mother was the daughter of the poet's youngest son, James Glencairn Burns. We have, therefore, in Adelaide society, a lineal descendant of the master of Scottish song, if, indeed, not of all song. Those who may have seen at any time the portrait of "Bonnie Jean," taken in somewhat advanced life, will remember the child that stands by her side with a daisy in her hand. This child was named Daisy by her father, J. Glencairn Burns, and in womanhood Daisy became Mrs. Scott's mother. Daisy was the grand-daughter of "The Bonnie Jean," as Mrs. Scott affectionately called her.

The first object Mrs. Scott showed me was the topaz seal of her great-grandfather. It had stamped many a bright epistle, no doubt. Engraved on a yellow topaz stone is a "thrush" sitting on a twig, and encircled by the words, "Wood notes wild." I could hardly believe that my eyes rested on the veritable seal of the great Scottish genius. It seemed so precious, as my fingers rested upon it, I felt as if it were still instinct with the touch of the great departed. I then examined a manuscript in his handwriting. Very old and very worn, but most carefully preserved. It is a poetic effusion, written 106 years ago, and signed in his own usual firm hand—Robert Burns. Underneath his signature he had evidently written one or two words—probably Poet-Laureate—but they are effectually erased. There are one or two corrections, and as it has never appeared in any collected edition of his works I here append a copy. It is dated from Edinburgh, 1787.

The crimson blossom charms the bee,  
The summer's sun the swallow,

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So dear this tuneful gift to me  
From lovely Isabella.

Her portrait fair upon my mind  
Revolving time shall mellow,  
And mem'ry's latest effort find  
The lovely Isabella.

No bard or lover's rapture this,  
In fancies vain and shallow,  
She is, so come my soul to bliss,  
The lovely Isabella.

Who the "lovely Isabella" was it is difficult to say. A careful perusal of the poet's whereabouts in 1787, although given with great detail in his life by Chambers, does not reveal the lady who had excited his muse. It was the year in which he was mainly in Edinburgh, and during the early months of which he met the famous Duchess of Gordon, besides many other Scotch folk of rank and literary fame. It is supposed that the "lovely Isabella" formed one of the group in the beautiful painting lately hung for too brief a period in the Adelaide Gallery of Art by Sir Thomas Elder, and entitled "Burns reading the 'Cottar's Saturday Night' to the Duchess of Gordon." The year 1787 was one of the most eventful of his life. Still it is somewhat strange that "Isabella" cannot be identified.

It is the intention of the South Australian Caledonian Society to erect a monument to the memory of Burns. I understand that its completion is near, and within a short period the ceremony of unveiling the statue will be performed. This will be an honour which any Chieftain of that society may feel proud to have conferred upon him. But may I suggest that while a lineal descendant of the poet is here to raise the veil, no other hand should be asked to do it. If I accept my own feelings as the feelings of every Scotchman, and of every true admirer of my country's most famous son, the desire will be universal that Mrs. Scott should perform the ceremony; and the Caledonian Society will feel proud, I am sure, that a lady so representative of Robert Burns and the Bonnie Jean is in our midst at this moment to unveil the form that will remind the generations that come and go of the greatest genius of song.

## IX.—MR. J. R. TUTIN'S EDITION OF BURNS.

MR. J. R. TUTIN, Hull, well known for his scholarly editions of the poems of Crashaw and the Vaughans, and also as the editor of *The Wordsworth Dictionary*, was induced by Messrs. Griffith, Farran & Co., London, to edit Burns for their "Newbery Classics." In addition to performing his editorial functions in the way of writing a prefatory memoir, notes, glossary, etc., Mr. Tutin has been enabled, through the kindness of a Bradford firm, to give some new readings of the song—"A Man's a Man for a' That," from a manuscript version written into a copy of Burns's poems, published in 1794. Mr. Tutin is almost inclined to regard this version as having been made subsequent to the generally accepted one; but we are rather disposed to think, after a considerable experience of collating Burns's manuscripts, that it is an earlier version than that given in the ordinary editions of the poet. However, we give it here, in connection with another version of a song by Burns, with the refrain, "For a' that," which has just been brought under our notice, in order that the reader may form his own opinion of the subject. The variations from the general text we print in italics.

"For a' that, and a' that."

[Is there, for honest poverty  
That hangs his head, and a' that?  
The coward-slave, we pass him by—  
We dare be poor for a' that!  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Our toils obscure, and a' that,  
The rank is but the guinea's stamp—  
The man's the gowd for a' that.]

What tho' on hamely fare we dine—  
Wear hodden grey an' a' that;  
Gie fools their *silk*, and knaves their wine;  
A man's a man for a' that.  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
Their tinsel show an' a' that;  
*An' honest man, tho' ne'er sae poor,*  
*Is chief of man for a' that.*

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,  
Wha struts an' stares an' a' that;  
Tho' hundreds *beckon* at his nod,  
He's but a cuif for a' that.  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
His *dignities* an' a' that;  
A man of independent mind  
*Can sing an' laugh* at a' that.

*The King* can mak' a belted knight,  
A Marquis, Duke, an' a' that;  
But an honest man's aboon his might,  
Guid faith, he mauna fa' that.  
*An' a' that, an' a' that,*  
*His garters, stars,* an' a' that;  
The piit of sense an' *vaie* of worth  
*Are better far* than a' that.

Then let us pray *the time may come,*  
*An' come* it will for a' that;  
When sense an' *truth* o'er a' the earth,  
*Shall bear* the gree for a' that.  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
*An' come it will* for a' that;  
*An' man* to man *the wide world* o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that.

In Mr. Tutin's version, only the last four verses are given. This would seem to imply that the first or introductory verse, which we place within brackets to distinguish it from the others, was added about the time when the other alterations were made on the words we have italicized, when Burns was rewriting it for his friend Johnson.

The third verse of the above song closely resembles the fourth stanza in the Heron Election Ballads, also written to the same tune—*For a' that, and a' that*,—as that to which the lyrics which form the subject of these notes, was set:—

But why should we to nobles jouk?—  
And its against the law that—  
For why?—a lord may be a gouk,  
Wi' ribbon, star, an' a' that!  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
Here's Heron yet for a' that!  
A lord may be a lousy loun,  
Wi' ribbon, star, and a' that.

Our next poem is transcribed from the holograph manuscript in the poet's handwriting in the possession of a gentlemen residing at Tigh-na-bruaich.

SONG—Tune, "*For a' that, an' a' that.*"

Tho' women's minds like winter's winds,  
May shift, an' turn, an' a' that;  
The noblest breast adores them maist,  
A consequence I draw that.  
Chorus—For a' that, an' a' that,  
An' twice as meikle's a' that;  
My dearest bluid to do them guid,  
They're welcome till't for a' that.  
Great love I bear to all the fair,  
Their humble slave an' a' that;

But lordly will, I hold it still  
A mortal sin to throw that.  
For a' that, etc.

In rapture sweet this hour we meet,  
Wi' mutual love an' a' that ;  
But for how lang the flee may stang,  
Let inclination law that.  
For a' that, etc.

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,  
They've ta'en me in, an' a' that ;  
But clear your decks, an' here's the sex,  
I like the jauds for a' that.  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
An' twice as meikle's a' that ;  
My dearest bluid to do them guid,  
They're welcome till't an' a' that.

This composition is an altered version of the "Bard's Song," in the cantata of *The Jolly Beggars*. In the cantata the first two verses and the chorus read :—

I am a Bard of no regard,  
Wi' gentle folks an' a' that ;  
But Homer-like, the glow'rin' byke,  
Frae town to town I draw that.

*Chorus*—For a' that, an' a' that,  
An' twice as meikle's a' that ;  
I've lost but ane, I've twa behind,  
I've wife enough for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,  
Castalia's burn an' a' that ;  
But there it streams an' richly reams,  
My Helicon I ca' that.  
For a' that, etc.

The remaining three verses are the same as those in the Tigh-na-braaich version, with this difference, that the chorus for the last verse in the "Bard's Song" is the same as the chorus given above, viz. :—

For a' that, an' a' that,  
An' twice as meikle's a' that ;  
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,  
They're welcome till't for a' that.

The same song, differing from the Tigh-na-braaich copy and the "Bard's Song" in this, that it has a different chorus and an additional verse immediately following the second stanza, was sent by Burns to Johnson's Museum, and published in that work in 1790. To complete the subject, we transcribe the variations referred to.

Tho' woman's minds, like *wintry* winds,  
May shift, and turn, an' a' that ;  
The noblest breast adores them maist—  
A consequence I draw that.

*Chorus*—For a' that, an' a' that,  
And twice as meikle's a' that ;  
The bonnie lass that I lo'e best  
Shall be my ain for a' that.

But there is ane above the lave,  
Has wit, and sense, an' a' that ;  
A bonnie lass, I like her best,  
And wha a crime dare ca' that ?  
For a' that, etc.

These readings afford us a glimpse into Burns's workshop, so to speak. We see how a potent phrase, such as the common refrain, "For a' that," acted on his imagination, and engendered so many diverse sentiments, which, after a slow process of elaboration; ultimately assumed the forms in which we now find them incorporated into the different lyrics in the editions of the poet's works. The version from the holograph under review has not been included in any edition of Burns; and, we should think, is not generally known to exist, and but for the courtesy of a friend we would not have been enabled to record it here in connection with the four verses expiscated by Mr. Tutin, who readily allowed us to make use of his notes for our present article.

## X.—A BURNSIAN LAY.

BY DUNCAN MACGREGOR CRERAR.

*Inscribed, with deep regard, to the Premier Burns Organisation, The Greenock Burns Club.*

TIME ever rolls upon its way,  
Naught can its pauseless course retard ;  
Now comes again the natal day  
Of our renowned, our peerless Bard.

In North, in South, and East, and West,  
Is honoured aye this day of days ;  
With leal devotion swells each breast,  
As every voice proclaims his praise.



His heart loved all, he tuned his lyre  
 E'en to the creatures of the sod ;  
 He who did chant with holy fire,  
 Divinely worshipped Nature's God.  
 We feel as 'neath a raptured spell,  
 When read or sung his tunesome words ;  
 They bind in love time cannot quell  
 Our souls with filial, golden cords.  
 True men of Greenock, first a-field  
 To cherish his undying fame,  
 Ye gave me place in your charmed guild—  
 An honour I am proud to claim !

I waft you all my thanks sincere,  
 And pledge, if I've your favour won,  
 A health : " God bless you, comrades dear ;  
 And grant long life to Morison !"  
 Yours, friends, to guard the sacred spot,  
 Where Highland Mary's ashes lie ;  
 Ward well the trust dear to each Scot,  
 With kindly heart and watchful eye.  
 His effigies with joy we see,  
 Memorials grand, and classic urns ;  
 We toast " The Immortal Memory  
 Of our illustrious ROBERT BURNS !"

## XI.—A YORKSHIREMAN'S TRIBUTE TO BURNS.

BY LIONEL VULCAN.

JOHN NICHOLSON, the Airedale poet, was born on November 29th, 1790, and was drowned in the river Aire the evening before Good Friday, April 13th, 1843. He is a Yorkshire poet of some excellence. His chief poems are "The Lyre of Ebor" and "Airedale in Ancient Times." He wrote a play, "The Siege of Bradford," which was successfully acted in 1820. The following tribute to the memory of Robert Burns was penned by Nicholson. The lines were spoken at the anniversary meeting at Leeds to celebrate the birthday of Burns, 1826. They were reprinted, and a copy was sent to Lieutenant-Colonel Burns during the Glasgow Centenary Festival in honour of his father. He thought so highly of them that he wrote to Nicholson's widow on behalf of his brother and himself :—"We think this poem superior to, and more to the purpose than, many of the centenary poems." The last verse has been pronounced by competent judges one of the finest tributes ever penned to the memory of Burns. It is worthy of note that the amiable and talented editor of the *Sheffield Iris*, James Montgomery, wrote

a most favourable review of Nicholson's first volume.

### BURNS.

LEARNING has many a rhymers made  
 To flatter near the throne,  
 But Scotia's genius has displayed  
 A poet of her own.

His lyre he took to vale and glen,  
 To mountain and to shade ;  
 Centuries may pass away, but when  
 Will such a lyre be played ?

His native strains each bard may try,  
 But who has got his fire ?  
 Why none, for Nature saw him die,  
 Then took away his lyre.

And for that lyre the learned youth  
 May search the world in vain ;  
 She vowed she ne'er would lend it more  
 To sound on earth again ;

But called on Fame to hang it by—  
 She took it with a tear,  
 Broke all the strings to bind the wreath  
 That BURNS shall ever wear.

## XII.—BURNS IN 1894.

From the "*Glasgow Herald*," Jan. 25th, 1894.

SCOTLAND'S true saint's day has come round once more ; to-night Burns will again be surveyed from the standpoint of the Burns

Clubs. There is no reason to believe that the enthusiasm which has led to the formation of these altogether unique societies is on

the wane. On the contrary, it is a moot point whether Burns Clubs or Golf Clubs are springing up with the greater rapidity all over the world. In some quarters, of course, the annual outbreak of panegyric will be unfavourably criticised as it has been in the past. But the supreme justification of what is perhaps the most remarkable literary portent of the day is the mere fact of its existence. The great majority of the members of Burns Clubs are neither fools, toppers, nor self-advertising egotists, although, no doubt, specimens of all three objectionable varieties of humanity are to be found among them, as they are to be found in every large company. They are simply men of action, belonging to all classes, who, holding that Burns is emphatically the poet of such as themselves, think there is no harm in stating their belief once a year, and fortifying it with liberal quotations. There is, however, another reason, and one of a more strictly poetical kind, why the reputation of Burns is greater now than it has been at any period since his death. He said himself of De Lolme's work on the British Constitution that it would serve as a creed of British liberty till a better was found. De Lolme has been superseded, but Burns, as the poet of men of action, as the great preacher of the doctrine that there is nothing in life which is so common or unclean as to fail to lend itself to poetic treatment, has not been superseded. Mr. R. L. Stevenson, the most eminent of living Scotch—and, indeed, of British—artists in diction, has claimed for Burns that for a direct speaking style he is without a rival, that words were his slaves. Leaving for the moment out of consideration the subjects of Burns's poems, is it not a fact that in this matter of a direct speaking style he is superior to most of the poets who have come after him, and can be mentioned in the same breath with him? Take even Wordsworth. He was direct and simple enough, at all events when he was in his "Peter Bell" vein. But then he was simple at the cost of robustness, which Burns never was. Browning is so obscure, that, like Meredith in fiction, his work can be taken only as a literary liqueur. Even Tennyson intones his message to the world in such a fashion that

it sometimes fails to go straight from heart to heart.

But compare Burns even with some living professors of the art of poetry which, in spite of Mr. Edmund Gosse, plain men will still regard as simply "impassioned truth." There has lately been, we are told, a New Birth of Poetry. According to a whole legion of boomers and log-rollers a great poet has appeared in the person of Mr. Francis Thompson, before whom, it seems, even Messrs. Watson, Henley, and Le Gallienne must hide their diminished heads. Mr. Thompson may be a poet, but he certainly has yet to show that he can be placed in the same category with the great ones gone, whose greatness was allied with simplicity. He talks of "impurpate" and "rubiginous" and "the glorious gules of a glowing rust." When the moon breaks through a cloud it is described as

"The flash of a golden perturbation, the travelling  
threat of a witchéd birth;  
Till heavily parts a sinister chasm, a grisly jaw  
whose verges soon,  
Slowly and ominously filled by the on-coming  
plenilune,  
Supportlessly congest with fire, and suddenly spit  
forth the moon."

If the plain man turns from this to

"The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,  
And time is setting with me, Oh!  
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair,  
I'll never trouble them nor thee, oh!"

has he not some reason to say that he has turned from mere word-twisting to the graphic pathos of a true poet? It is thus that Mr. Richard le Gallienne makes his Paolo and Francesca act as lovers have done since the beginning of time.

"As the great sobbing fulness of the sea  
Fills to the throat some void and aching cave,  
Till all its billows tremble silently,  
Pressed with sweet weights of softly-lapping wave;  
So kissed these mighty lovers glad and brave."

Have we not here the true accent of Sir Piercie Shafton, and how much less modern is it than

"The sky was blue, the wind was still,  
The moon was shining clearly;  
I set her down wi' right good will  
Among the rigs o' barley."

I kent her heart was a' my ain ;  
 I lov'd her most sincerely ;  
 I kiss'd her owre and owre again  
 Among the rigs o' barley."

But this directness of speech is noticeable all through Burns's writings. The assertion that "there is nothing in the papers" is a very common one at certain periods. Has it ever been better expressed than in the lines that Burns extemporised on returning a newspaper to his friend Captain Riddel, which began—

"Your news and Review, Sir, I've read through  
 and through, Sir ;  
 With little admiring or blaming ;  
 The papers are barren of home news or foreign,  
 No murders or rapes worth the naming?"

While the Burns Clubs would be quite entitled to defend their enthusiasm on the ground that its object is in many respects marvellously modern, and in none more than in his possession of a style which is probably unrivalled for energy and directness, it is quite permissible to hint that they might utilise the pecuniary resources at their disposal to much greater purpose than they have yet done. Mr. Aitken, the editor of the new Aldine edition of Burns, makes a suggestion in his paper on a "Collection of

Burns Manuscripts," which might well be extended. It is to the effect that one or other of the Burns Clubs should reprint the whole catalogue of the papers alluded to in his paper. Why not go a step further? Why should not the Burns Clubs combine for the express purpose of verifying, and, if need be, buying whatever manuscripts may in future be offered for sale? "Verify, verify, verify," should, however, be at present the watchword of Burns clubs, and admirers of Burns generally. Mr. Robert Brown, in the excellent history of the Paisley Burns Clubs which he recently published, reminds us how up to the year 1818 the 29th of January was believed to have been Burns's birth day. In that year Mr. R. A. Smith, a member of the Paisley Burns Club, went to the registrar of the parish of Ayr and obtained a certificate of the birth of Burns, which, of course, finally demonstrated that the 25th was the day. The work of authenticating the actual facts of Burns's life has certainly not been completed; it is, indeed, only in its infancy. The machinery, however, which could be set in motion if the Clubs were to unite their forces of money and enthusiasm would soon accomplish this result.

### XIII.—ROBERT BURNS (JAN. 25, 1894.)

*By Dr. BENJ. F. LEGGETT, Author of "A Sheaf of Song," "A Tramp through Switzerland," etc., etc.*

AGAIN above the eastern hills,  
 In wondrous beauty born,  
 The rosy dawn all heaven fills—  
 The poet's natal morn.  
 His birthday ; yet though years may trail  
 Their garments manifold,  
 Of summer bloom and winter wail,  
 They cannot make him old.  
 To-day his voice still lifts and cheers,  
 Inspires with courage strong,  
 And all the weary waste of years  
 Is fairer for his song.  
 The harp that with all nature sings  
 Of love and truth sublime,

With rare immortal sweetness rings  
 Across the years of time.  
 And not alone by bonnie Doon  
 Or rippling waves of Ayr,  
 Or where sweet Afton's waters croon—  
 His fame is everywhere.  
 For all the songs that met his ear,  
 From breeze and bird and rill,  
 He filled with love and sang so clear  
 The world is listening still !  
 And since each heart some love must hold,  
 All lands beneath the sky,  
 Will keep his fame from growing old—  
 And BURNS will never die !

## XIV.—A COLLECTION OF BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.

BY MR. G. A. AITKEN.

*From "The Glasgow Herald," Jan. 25, 1894.*

IN 1861, when autograph songs by Robert Burns could be bought for a guinea, and it was, therefore, not worth forging them, a remarkable collection of eighty Burns manuscripts was sold by Messrs. Puttick & Simpson, the well-known auctioneers in London. The sale was on the 2nd of May, and soon afterwards the portion of the catalogue relating to the Burns papers was privately printed in separate pamphlet form by the compiler, Mr. E. C. Bigmore, under the title, "Descriptive List of a Collection of Original Manuscript Poems by Robert Burns." Twenty-five copies were struck off, and it was only recently that I became aware of the existence of this little book. None of Burns's editors seem to have known it, and, though it is useless to attempt, after so long a time, to trace the papers, which were for the most part bought by London booksellers, an account of them will, I think, be found interesting to admirers of the Poet, and may lead to the present owners of some of the manuscripts making known where they are now to be found. I shall confine my remarks chiefly to pieces which are not to be found in Burns's works, in the hope that the lines given in the catalogue may enable students of old Scotch poetry to identify them, and thus show whether or not it is probable that they were of Burns's own composition. It is, of course, well known that Burns often copied out old verses, and the existence of lines in his writings does not, therefore, in itself afford proof of authorship. The references below are to my edition of Burns's poems published last year by Messrs. Bell & Sons.

One of the first pieces mentioned is "The Hue and Cry of John Lewars, a poor man ruined and undone by robbery and murder, being an awful warning to the young men of this age how they look well to themselves in this dangerous, terrible world." This is a complaint, in four four-line verses, of Lewars's heart being stolen by Miss Woods, governess at Miss M'Murdo's boarding-school, and begins, "A thief and a murderer, stop her who can!" From the personages mentioned,

there can be little or no doubt that these lines are by Burns, and it would be interesting if they could be recovered. Another piece, obviously Burns's, is "To Captain Gordon, on being asked why I was not to be of the party with him and his brother Kenmure at Syme's," which begins "Dost ask, dear Captain, why from Syme," and, after comparing some of his own abilities (?) with Syme's, concludes (according to the catalogue)—

"Yet must I still the sort deplore  
That to my griefs adds one more,  
In balking me the social hour  
With you and noble Kenmure."

Some such word as "yet" seems to be needed after "adds" in the second line. Next comes "A Sonnet on Sonnets," beginning "Fourteen, A Sonneteer thy praises sings," and ending—

"But brockie played, boo ! to bawsie,  
And aff gaed the cowte like the win' ;  
Poor Wattie he fell in the cawsie,  
And birs'd a' the bones in his skin ;  
The pistols fell out o' the hulsters,  
And were a' bedaubed wi' dirt :  
The folk ran about him in clusters,  
Some leugh and cry'd, 'lad, are ye hurt ?'"

Soon afterwards we find a copy of "The auld man's mare's dead," which is given in Johnson's "Scots Musical Museum," v. 500, without indication of its authorship. It will also be found in Chambers's "Songs of Scotland before Burns," 141. There is, too, a single verse and chorus of "Where hae ye been so braw, lass," which I have not traced elsewhere; and a verse of four lines beginning "When heavy and slow move the dark days of sorrow and care." We find, also, a copy of the ballad, "There lived a man down in yon glen," which is printed by Johnson, iv. 376. A fragment of "Now westlin' winds" (Poems, i. 42) is interesting, chiefly because of the variation in the last line; the catalogue states that the "Jeanie Armour" is in shorthand :—

"Now breezy wins' and slaughtering guns,  
Bright autumn's pleasant weather,  
And the muir-cock springs on whirring wings  
Amang the blooming heather.



Now waving crops, with yellow tops,  
 Delight the weary farmer,  
 An' the moon shines bright when I roam at night  
 To muse on Jeanie Armour."

"What lucubrations can be made upon it?  
 Fourteen good measured verses make a sonnet."

Another MS. contained a song, in eight verses, "Here are we, loyal Natives," and two other songs. Another paper had "Broom-besoms, a song," beginning "I maun hae a wife, whatsoe'er she be," with three more verses to the same tune. Mr. D. McNaught tells me that he heard verses, of which he remembers only the following, sung years ago, but that he never saw them in print; whether they form a portion of the same song is uncertain:—

"Fine broom besoms,  
 Besoms fine and new,  
 Besoms for a penny,  
 Reengers for a plack;  
 Gin ye dinna want them  
 Tie them on my back."

We then come to a fragment of the "Passion's Cry" (Poems, Vol. II., pp. 234-6), or "Sappho Rediva," as Douglas called it, which includes the lines first printed by Dr. Waddell, and ends in accordance with the MS. in the Edinburgh University Library, which I quoted in a note. The next piece, which is unfinished, is very different. It consists of 32 lines, descriptive of a fair, and begins, "Sae mony braw Jockies and Jennies." The following lines are quoted:—

"And Wattie, the muirland laddie,  
 Was mounted upon a grey cowte,  
 Wi' sword by his side, like a cadie,  
 To drive in the sheep and the nowte.  
 His doublet, sae weel did it fit him,  
 It scarcely cam' down to mid-thie;  
 Wi' hair powther'd, bonnet and feather,  
 And housin at curpon and tee."

A portion (seventeen lines) of a Dedication, beginning "Sir, think not with a mercenary view," is unpublished. So, too, is an Elegy, "Craigdarroch, fam'd for speaking art," in four verses, of which the last is as follows:—

"Go to your Marble Gaffs! ye Great!  
 In a' the tinkler trash of State!  
 But by thy honest turf I'll wait,  
 Thou Man of Worth,  
 And weep the ae best fellow's fate  
 E'er lay in earth."

A version of "Fintry, my stay in worldly

stane," is described as a first sketch, with four unpublished verses; but they are not quoted, and are probably included in the poem as now published (Poems, II., 322). There were also a draft of the "Monody on a lady famed for her caprice" (III., 169), without the fifth verse, and with many variations from the printed text; the first five verses of "The Whistle" (II., 294), with variations; and two versions of the first two verses of "Sing on, sweet songster" (III., 232). In a copy of the "Occasional Address spoken by Miss Fontenelle" (III., 158) the following lines were marked for omission:—

"O Ma'am," replied the silly strutting creature,  
 Screwing each self-important awkward feature,  
 'Flatt'ry I hate, as I admire your taste,  
 At once so just, correct, profound, and chaste."

A copy of "The Five Carlins" (II., 305) was sent to Mr. David Blair, gunmaker, Birmingham, with these lines:—"I send you this foolish ballad—I have not yet forgiven Fortune for her mischievous game of cross-purposes that deprived me of the pleasure of seeing you again when you were here. Adieu! R. BURNS."

A portion of "The Brigs of Ayr" (beginning "'Twas when the stacks got on their winter hap") is described as containing seven unpublished lines; and on the fourth page of the MS. was a draft of the dedicatory letter to Ballantine. The copy of the "Prologue spoken by Mr. Woods" (II., 117) had four lines not printed. A first sketch of "The Jolly Beggars" had "Luckie Nansie" instead of "Poosie Nansie" (I., 157, 120), and the following interesting note by Burns:—"Luckie Nansie is Racer Jess's mother in my Holy Fair. Luckie kept a kind of caravansery for the lower order of wayfaring strangers and pilgrims."

In a copy of the first two verses of "No Spartan tribe" (III., 180), "Hibernia" appears instead of "Columbia;" and the "Prologue spoken at Dumfries, 1790" (II., 310), had two additional lines. In a copy of "The Posie" (III., 32) each verse had as a refrain its last two lines. The song "O wat ye wha that lo'es me" (III., 264) appears without the third verse, and with variations; and there were only two verses of "She says she lo'es me best of all" (III., 188). The

third verse was wanting in "Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair" (III., 208).

Among the other manuscripts at this sale was Burns's Common-Place Book, April, 1783, consisting of 43 folio pages; and "Scotch Poems by Robert Burness," 59 pages, an autograph collection of very important pieces. Others I have not mentioned because they are to be found in the printed poems; but the whole catalogue of 24 pages might well be reprinted by one of the Burns

clubs, in which case the prices obtained for the MSS. should be added from the copy of the auctioneer's catalogue in the Newspaper-Room at the British Museum. We can only wish that Mr. Bigmore had been more liberal of quotation when referring to unpublished lines, and hope that the notice now drawn to the matter will lead to the discovery and publication of some of the manuscripts dispersed so long ago.

#### XV.—THE OLDEST BURNS CLUB IN THE WORLD.

THE members of Greenock Burns Club on the 25th January, 1894, celebrated the anniversary of the poet, under the presidency of Mr. J. M. Barrie, in the Saloon of the Town Hall. A lingering doubt still remains in the minds of a few outsiders as to the claim of Greenock to take precedence of all other Burns Clubs throughout the world in the matter of origin. The question has, however, been settled once and for all, so far as they are concerned, the first minute-book begins on the 21st July, 1801, continues an unbroken record to 1810. The second from 1811 to 1850. The third from 1850 to 1886, and the fourth from 1885 to 1894, the overlapping takes place when the younger was begun, and when the older club amalgamated and handed over their property. The July 21st 1801 minute-book was kept by one R. Barr, secretary, and the opening pages are occupied by a lengthy ode on Burns, written by a still well-remembered Greenockian, Neil Dougall, precentor, poet, and musical composer, whose name is associated with "Kilmarnock," "Naples," and other popular psalm tunes. This ode, which exhibits no little power of language and is not wanting in poetic fire, had been composed by Mr. Dougall a few days after the decease of the bard, but was brought to the view of the public for the first time at this meeting of Greenock Burns Club on 21st July, 1801. There follow in the minute-book entries of the usual common-place nature, records of literary and convivial gatherings, few of them offering anything further of special interest for us of to-day. We come upon a reprint

from the *Greenock Advertiser*, giving a detailed account of the first anniversary celebration held at Kilmarnock on 29th January, 1808, on which occasion representatives were present from Greenock. A second newspaper cutting is even more interesting, as it is an advertisement announcing a journey of the Burns Club members to Alloway on 29th January, 1803.

Since the amalgamation of the Societies a dozen years ago, the Burns Club of Greenock has become a power in the community, and it now embraces within its membership a fair representation of all classes. But its influence has reached far beyond the narrow confines of the town at the Tail of the Bank, for, thanks to the energy and zeal with which affairs are managed by the hon. secretary, Mr. J. B. Morison, and other enthusiasts amongst the officials, the honorary members, well-wishers, and helpers of the club, include eminent persons from many corners of the world.

Apart from the worship of Burns himself, the chief glories of the Greenock Club are the associations of Highland Mary, which cling around the town, and which they recognise as a sacred duty to keep fresh and green. The members are still fortunate in having in their midst the venerable nephew of Highland Mary, who, now over the fourscore, retains a remarkable keenness of mind as well as vigour of body. Mr. Campbell remembers quite well when but a boy being sent to show visitors and friends the old house in Charles Street in which Burns's lovely Highland lassie died: and speaks of

many who portrayed to him glowing accounts of this young Highland lassie who has been immortalized by the innermost thoughts beautifully depicted in the poem produced on that ever memorable winter's evening in Ellisland in 1789 long after her death; and but for this poetic gem of true genius she might yet have lain in the Old North Kirk graveyard in Greenock "unwept, unhonoured and unsung."

Up till within a year or two Mr. Campbell was a central figure at the local Burns anniversary meetings, but of late, and especially in severe weather, he finds it safer to remain at the kindly ingleside than risk the inclemencies of a night's excursion. He is visited at his home in Kelly Street by many pilgrims, and tells his story with rare modesty, his memories always tender, his attitude almost devotional. The memorial stone in the Old West Kirkyard was laid on 25th January, 1842, on which occasion the Rev. W. Menzies offered up an appropriate and impressive prayer, the MS. of which is still in the possession of the club. For many years the grave was comparatively neglected, and had little if any care bestowed upon it; but in these days the reproach has been taken away by the Greenock Burns Club who keep it in order, and the last resting place of Mary Campbell is now something in which the residents of Greenock exhibit pride. Next to it in melancholy interest is the scene amidst which Mary reached her early death.

Not very long ago, considerable doubt existed as to whether this house, 31 Upper Charles Street, or another in Mince Collop Close, was really that in which Mary Campbell died. The result of careful investigation has led to a general belief in favour of the former. This view is confirmed by Mr. Archibald Campbell, Mary's nephew, whose memory serves him very confidently on this point. The old building has, of course, been long ago removed, and on the site now stands a large four-storeyed tenement. Not far from this spot—in fact, at the eastern corner of Sir Michael Street and the Vennel—is the house in which Mary's mother and family resided for a period. In the old Duncan Street burying-ground the family lair is to be seen, with a headstone bearing

the name of Robert Campbell, a brother of thy beloved Mary.

The rooms of the Greenock Burns Club, which are part of the Parochial Board buildings in Nicolson Street, are fast filling with relics of the poet and with memorials of other eminent men and women.

The Picture Gallery contains autographed enlarged portraits of Andrew Carnegie, Francis H. Underwood, E. J. Phelps, T. F. Bayard, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Duncan Macgregor Crerar, John D. Ross, Professor Blackie, Lord Rosebery, Professor Masson, Sir Frederick Leighton, Colin Rae Brown, Arthur J. Balfour, Lord Tennyson, Lord Kelvin, Lord Blythswood, Andrew Lang, Sir Chas. Pearson, Sir Thos. Sutherland, Alexander Anderson, Charles Bradlaugh, Henry Longfellow, Robert Burns Begg, J. Schipper, Archibald Campbell, Henry Irvine, J. L. Toole, Margaret Wingate, Neil Dougall, etc., etc. Paintings of the houses where Burns and Highland Mary died.

One of the most gratifying circumstance in relation to this increasing property is that many of the valuables have been sent by Burns lovers in America and elsewhere abroad, who are anxious to assist in rearing a memorial within the precincts of the mother club. Not the least precious of the gifts is that from Sir Noel Paton. This is Sir Noel's rough drawing for a picture entitled "the Vision."

"And wear thou this," she solemn said,  
And bound the holly round his head.

The gift was made to the club last year, but the sketch was done so long ago as 1858. In a letter, accompanying the picture, Sir Noel said:—

"It was designed many years ago, as you will see by the date, and I feel it to be a very inadequate *ettling* at a splendid subject, which, were I some twenty years younger, I would yet try to paint. Still, such as it is, I have no doubt the club will rather have it than not, as a slight memorial of an honorary member's goodwill."

The members of the club regard as especially precious the original portrait of Betty Burns, daughter of the poet, which is guaranteed by Mrs. Thomson's own daughter, the widow of the poet, David Wingate.



Amongst the other relics of value within the rooms are:—A gold toothpick presented by Burns to Gavin Hamilton; Tam Samson's walking-stick; Highland Mary's jewellery, consisting of two sets of earrings and a brooch, the latter being believed to have been presented by Burns; Mrs. Begg's spinning-wheel.

Bewick plates for Burns's and Fergusson's Poems, Alnwick (reprint).

Bewick frontispiece for Vol. III., Fergusson's Poems, Alnwick (unpublished).

Bewick frontispiece for Vol. III., Burns's Poems (unpublished).

Autograph manuscript of Allan Ramsay's "The Fair Assembly," autograph letter of Longfellow, etc.

In the library, the collection of rare volumes and MSS. is already considerable. The former includes a well-preserved copy of Adam Neill & Co.'s Edinburgh, 1800, edition of the poet's works, which was handed to the club in 1802 by Archibald Campbell, brother of Mary Campbell, and father of Archibald Campbell, still living in Greenock. There are also several other editions of Burns's poems, all of them valuable, and the gifts of friends of the club in various parts of the world. The autograph album contains letters from R. S. Malone, 1847; George Gilfillan; R. M. Milnes, 1848; Helen Faucet, 1849; Gerald Massay, 1858; Anna Maria Hall, 1859; James Glencairn Burns, 1860; Andrew Park, 1862; Samuel Cook, 1888; Louis Napoleon (Casels), 1870; Charles Mackay, 1871; Shirley Brooks, 1871; Andrew Halliday, 1871; George Cruikshanks, 1871; Earl of Shaftsbury, 1873; James M'Kie, 1874; Martin F. Tupper, 1874; Theodore Martin, 1884; Thomas Ford, 1884; John Caird (Errol), 1856; Westland Marston, 1887; Henry Irvine, 1889; Florence Brandsmith; Lorne, 1890; Minnie Mackay (Marie Corelli), Samuel Smiles, Emily de Quincey, William Allan, George K. Sims, Argyll, Carnegie, Rosebery, E. J. Phelps, Charles Rogers, David Sneddon, P. Hateley Waddell, F. T. Bayard, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Professor Blackie, R. Burns Begg, A. J. Balfour, Professor Masson, F. H. Underwood, Andrew Wilson (Dr.), Tennyson, Professor Jack, Sir

Noel Paton, J. M. Barrie, Blythwood, Kelvin, Sir Frederick Leighton, Dr. Walter Smith, Professor Bradley, Professor Nichol, J. Schipper (Vienna), Professor Angellier (Lille), Professor Veitch, Professor Donaldson, Dr. Adams.

No notice of the Greenock Burns Club would be complete without a sketch of the work undertaken each year for instilling into the rising generation a love for Scottish Poetry, Songs, Literature, and Flora. We give the syllabus for a recent competition—

## S Y L L A B U S.

### RECITATIONS.

*Infants and Standard I.*

"To a Mouse."

*Standards II. and III.*

"Tam Samson's Elegy."

*Standards IV. and V.*

"Lay of Last Minstrel," Canto VI., Stanzas I. and II.

Selection from "Cottar's Saturday Night," beginning "The cheerfu' supper done."

*Standards VI. and Ex-VI.*

"To a Louse." "Willie's Wife."

"To Mary in Heaven."

### LITERARY COMPETITION.

*Standards VI. and Ex-VI.*

(a.) "The Brigs of Ayr."

(b.) "Lady of the Lake," Canto I.

### SINGING COMPETITION.

*Standards I., II., III., IV., and V.*

"There was a lad was born in Kyle."

"My Nannie's awa'."

"Craigie-Lea" (L'annahill.)

*Standards VI. and Ex-VI.*

"A Rose-bud by my early walk."

"Last May a braw Wooser."

"Wandering Willie."

Competitors are allowed Choice of Songs, but may be required to sing any other in their Standard, if necessary, for decision.



## PUPIL TEACHERS.

*End of First and Second Years.*

(a.) "Life of Scott."

(b.) Questions on "The Brigs of Ayr," and the Auld Farmer's New-Year Salutation to his "Auld Mare Maggie."

*End of Third and Fourth Years.*

(a.) Outlines of the lives of Burns and Carlyle.

(b.) Questions on the Poems set for Recitation in the Standards.

## WILD FLOWERS, ETC.

This Class has been organised by THE ROYAL WEST RENFREWSHIRE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, with the object of awakening among School Children an interest in the study of Botany and Horticulture, and, through the kindness of Members of the Greenock Burns Club, they have been enabled to offer the following Special Prizes, to be competed for at the forthcoming Show of the Society, to be held on Thursday and Friday, 1st and 2nd September, 1892:—

First Prize in each Competition, the Burns Club's Handsome Bronze Medal; Second and Third Prizes, Books. Cards of Merit will also be awarded at the discretion of the Judges.

- 161 The most Complete and most Carefully-Dried and Mounted Collection of Plants mentioned in the Works of Burns.
- 162 The most Complete and most Carefully-Dried and Mounted Collection of Plants mentioned in the Works of Tannahill.
- 163 Best Collection of Wild Flowers, from the District; Dried and Mounted; the Popular Name of each Specimen to be given.
- 164 Best Collection of hardy British Ferns, Dried and Mounted; the Popular and Botanical Name of each Specimen to be given.
- 165 Best Bouquet of Grasses, Collected in the District; a list of the Popular Names of the Specimens must accompany each Bouquet.

- 166 Best Bouquet of Wild Flowers, Collected in the District; a list of the Popular Names of the Specimens must accompany each Bouquet.
- 167 Best Bouquet of Wild Flowers, Gathered and Made-up by Children under 14 years of age; Competitors to make-up their own Bouquets in the Hall between 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock on the First Morning of the Exhibition.
- 168 Best Window Plant, Grown Outside by Competitor, and Exhibited in Pot.

These Competitions are open to all Children attending School in the District, and no Entry Fee is required.

Dried and Mounted Specimens must be Exhibited on Sheets or Cards (12 inches by 18 inches).

All Bouquets must be Exhibited in Vases or Glasses.

Competitors in Numbers 161 and 162 may have a List of the Plants required for these Competitions on application to the Hon. Secretary of the Burns Club; but must give the Poem in which these are mentioned along with their Exhibit.

Intending Competitors must send to the Secretary, Mr. John J. Colquhoun, 2 Watt Place, Greenock, a note of each Competition in which they intend to take part, at least four days before the first Show Day (Sunday excepted), otherwise the Entries will not be received. Every Competitor's Name and Address (enclosed in envelope) to accompany each separate Exhibit.

All Exhibits must be delivered to the Guardians at the Town Hall by 9 o'clock on the morning of the First Day of the Exhibition, or they will be retained for Exhibition only.

The social life of the club is not confined to the anniversary dinner on the 25th January. There are quarterly meetings at which papers are read by honorary and active members, also the annual concert in connection with the school children's competitions, at which the successful competitors in recitations and songs entertain large and appreciative audiences, last but not least

there is the annual summer pilgrimage. Dumfries and the surrounding Burns country was gone over last year, and this year most likely some part of Ayrshire connected with our Scottish Bard. In conclusion it may be said that the primal object of this club since the amalgamation in 1885 and 1886 has been an honest endeavour to raise the standard of Burns clubs by some other method than the feeding and drinking process, and do something to merit the sympathy and support of the outside public, who have been prone to look with rather an unfavourable eye on

Burns club meetings in years gone past. The membership is limited to 300, and new members have always to wait on vacancies on the roll before they can be balloted for. This speaks well for the club now. Although there is and always has been a class of people who are ever wailing over Burns's failures and shortcomings, and whose narrow mental conceptions and self-egotism blinds them to forgetfulness of their own. Burns says:—

"Then gently scan your brother man,  
Still gentler sister woman,  
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,  
To step aside is human."

#### XVI.—MR. D. T. HOLMES, B.A., ON BURNS.

*An Address delivered before the Greenock Burns Club, January 25, 1894.—Reprinted from the "Greenock Telegraph."*

It has often been said with truth that one great reason for the universal popularity of this poet is the intensely human and sincere character of his writings. People see in him a man with no hypocritical pretensions to perfection. He disdained anything like untrue display. His character is written in large and legible letters in the open pages of his volume. It is this open-heartedness and absolute candour that endear him to us all: we do not look upon him as a literary grandee, but regard him rather as a personal friend, who has confided all his failings to us, and whose honour it is ours to maintain. It is not too much to say that by those very qualities of humanity—vivid and truthful characterisation and absolute candour—he turned the entire current of British literature into a new channel. However smart and clever the writers of the eighteenth century might be, there was something artificial and pedantic in their style. Nature was disregarded, and too much concern was bestowed on mere elegance and dignity. Burns showed that the commonest objects and topics might be treated poetically, and that the life of a roadside labourer might be as tragic as that of a king. He elevates a cottar to the sacred dignity of a priest, and gives him sublime conceptions of eternity and eternal things. He regards the peasant with his coat of hodden grey as more truly a man

than the gartered fops of rank and title. All artificiality is brushed aside. It is the common daisy on the hillside that he poetises, and from which he draws his most pathetic images. Some of his most vigorous descriptions are connected with village blacksmiths, with the barefoot beauties of the byre and workers in the furrow field. And his most remarkable poem, both for dramatic vividness and pithy vernacular, is one written to celebrate the high jinks of a parcel of wayside beggars. It is precisely by such feats that his fame is established for all time. His poems have made working men into literary critics. Nothing ever gave him greater pleasure than to hear that a poor ploughboy could not read "The Cottar's Saturday Night" without breaking into tears. Here was an example of poetry and genius acting on untutored nature and triumphantly showing their powers and showing too that no man, however lowly, is proof against the true poet's song. Many talented men have written obscurely and have muffled their meaning in learned phrases and allegories. Burns spoke directly to the heart; he set all men singing, and these voices have so grown in volume and vigour that the whole world is now melodious with our country's strains. Even in his own day men gave him the homage accorded only to a hero, to a type-specimen of the human race with the

ennobling qualities of the human race present in a concentrated form. The ploughman on the hillside felt himself a better and a nobler man from knowing that Robert Burns, like himself, had driven his team along the furzy braes. Nothing like this had ever been heard of in the history of literature since the days of Petrarch, when the cobblers of Italy had stitched their shoes in unison with the poet's strains. Observe too how the brightness of this man's personality has made a lane of light through the darkness of a bygone century. Every man with whom he came in contact has a certain share in his immortality. So long as the English language is spoken men will speak of Hamilton, Aitken, Sillar, Lapraik, Mackenzie, Nicol, and Blacklock. These men happened to come within his course, and though their tombstones may crumble we may be sure their memory will still survive. The long and illustrious house of Glencairn has had many distinguished men in its splendid line, but the one longest remembered will be the open-souled nobleman who befriended the ploughman poet and called forth those grateful lines which speak at once the worthiness of the patron and the manliness of the bard. Even the very bigots of the time shine in a light borrowed from his; and they have a certain claim to our remembrance, for they called forth such shafts of satire as have effectually pierced the weakness of cant for all time. Thus it is that the history of the world clusters round its great men. If Burns had composed mere society satires and drawing-room verses, his lines would have gone into oblivion along with sedan chairs and stage-coaches. But it was not outer semblance that he dealt with. None of his characters are lay figures; they are all living and breathing figures of flesh and blood. Hence it is that he never can be obsolete or out of tune. And I think we shall not be far wrong if we say that Burns has surpassed all modern poets in his delineation of the most permanent of all emotions, namely, the emotion of love; not merely the love of man to woman, which he calls a heavenly cordial in the melancholy vale, but the love of man to man which is the basis of friendship, the love of man to his country which is patriotism,

and the love of man to all created things, which is an essential element in all goodness and virtue. His pictures of love are not only Scottish; they are sublimely and universally human. His patriotism is a very pleasant subject for Scotsmen, and one that cannot easily grow stale. It was Burns and his successor Scott that made our country pre-eminently a land of romance, a land whose rivers and mountains were glorified by the celestial songs of the muses. It was pure love of country that led Burns to prefer Ramsay and Fergusson to other writers, and to say with a lowering of his own merit and a complete absence of selfishness that all his poetic work was but an imitation of those earlier writers. In lives that throb and palpitate with pure and noble feeling, he prays Heaven that Scotsmen, animated by the valour of the days of old, may be raised up in the day of their country's agony to stand like a wall of fire to guard their loved native land. With Burns, patriotism was a passion. Burns was much more than a patriotic Scot; in all things which are broadly human he is a citizen of the world, and all high-minded aspirations awaken his admiring regard. He ceases to be the poet of a dialect then, and speaks in sublime strains the general voice of mankind. His heart leaped with joy to hear of the downfall of tyranny in the French Revolution. And what a boundless pity was in that great heart of his; pity for the poor wretch shivering in a shed, with the cold drift falling on his thin sheets, pity even for the cattle exposed to the merciless beating of the wintry hail, pity for the songsters of the air fluttering and cowering under the snowy thatch! And we may note too that oppression and tyranny, however displayed, have his heartiest detestation, whether in the savage insolence of a bullying factor setting a poor cottar's family in tears, or in the grinding insolence of an autocrat affecting an entire nation with woe. This was the natural result of his high views of mankind. His leading virtues of conduct are manliness and aggressive independence. When we leave off consideration of those poems in which the superior power of genius appears in every line, and come to the consideration of those lighter efforts of his muse, we everywhere see



traces of a powerful and original mind—a mind adroit and shrewd in the combination of dissimilar ideas in the concise form of epigrams and humorous couplets. He surpasses the wits of Anne's reign in their own particular province. Those amusing epigrams which he threw off with such ease are among the best in the literature of Britain. And I think we are sometimes inclined to forget that this poet wrote also most elegant prose. It may be that in his letters there is much inequality displayed; possibly, also, that some are pitched in too high a key. Yet he has a magnificent mastery of language. Eloquent outbursts of rhetoric, solemn and earnest passages of religious fervour, vigorous paragraphs, sunnily rounded off with rich and racy fun—all these are found in his letters, and greatly add to our estimate of his ability. As a literary critic, he would have been a distinct success. Scattered over his poems are criticisms of his contemporaries which are often as true as they are humorous. And we may say, too, that in his consideration of those dark and dreadful problems which deal with man's destiny, and which have teased and appalled the subtlest intellects in all ages, Burns preserves a manly and sublime reverence. For cant and pretence he has nothing but hard words and biting jibes; but, for the man who does his life work, as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye, Burns's heart throbs and his eye glistens with the most approving admiration. Burns has pushed the dialect of Scotland into literary prominence. He always used the right word, in the right place, and invariably hits the very centre of the target. The rough, rude words of the highway and the market place acquire a new and vivid meaning from the nobility of his touch and the grace of his setting. And his ear, moreover, was so true and accurate

for the appropriateness and harmony of words that his verses realise the crowning triumph of the poet's art in being the very echo of the intended sense. Those who have studied the literatures of various ages have vainly attempted to parallel him with different ancient and modern writers. But Nature while producing innumerable song-writers, has produced but one Burns. He is "king among them a'." He stands now before a rapt and wondering world, no mercenary bard, but an honest man every inch of him, in the fulness of his fame, and trampling down every obstacle to eminence by the sheer force of his genius. He belongs, this Burns of ours, to the band of Immortals, who become greater as the ages roll on, to whom every generation owes the meed of homage, every country a debt of gratitude. His fame and its history is a record of triumph. He knocked at the gates of poetry, smitten with the true frenzy and noble rage of the Muses. If his works had not possessed the seeds of life and immortality they would now have been lining trunks and harbouring moths along with the transient works of Wolcott and Churchill. So long as life and love are what they are, so long will he be a contemporary of every generation. It might have been said of him,

"The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,  
The months will add themselves and form the years,  
The years will grow into the centuries,  
But his will ever be a name of praise."

In asking you to honour the immortal memory of Burns, there is no need for me to say further than that though dead he yet speaks in the clearest and liveliest tones, and that no prince born in the purple and nursed in the lap of luxury had ever half the potency of this king of song.

## XVII.—DUNBAR IN BURNS.

*From the SCOTSMAN, December 27, 1893.*

LITERARY Scots, it has been daringly said, is of no higher antiquity than "The Gentle Shepherd" of Allan Ramsay. The statement may safely be traversed. It is, indeed, no

less absurd than to say that there is no Scottish literature of earlier date than the beginning of last century. For the fact is patent that William Dunbar's best poetry is



expressed in a vigorous vernacular, and one of the most obvious features in the history of the Scottish language is the persistency with which for centuries that tongue has maintained its distinctive peculiarities of word and idiom. Quite three centuries lie between Burns and Dunbar, yet the earlier poet is not one whit less vernacular than the later, and the vernacular they severally employ is substantially one and the same. Every one knows that the language of Burns was the current dialect of the peasant Lowlander of his day, put to poetical uses, but it is not so generally recognised that it was also the almost perfect tradition of more than three centuries. Scottish words and phrases of remarkable expressiveness, which we now for the most part refer to Burns as if he were their grand first parent, were already current and mature both in the country and at the Court of James the Third, and are to be picked by scores from the pages of Dunbar. Open the book at random, and the sample comes readily—"attour," "wale," "haggis," "swats," "hurcheon," "hirpling," "branking," "aver" (*for* cart-horse), "swanky," "oxter," "hallan," "get" (*for* offspring), "roose" (*for* extol), "smoor," "widdie," "eldritch," "coft," "wauk," "swith," etc. Yet these words, and others like them, are mostly credited to the account of Burns. Scottish phrases and turns of expression common to both poets, and even more significant of the integrity of the language than single words, are no less plentiful. "Air and late," "scaith and scorn," "wae worth," "ill-willie" or "guid-willie," "hale an' fere," "I rede thee," "tak guid tent," "at kirk an' market," "to think lang" (*for* to weary), "drive ower" (*for* spend—said of time); and such terms as "true as ony steel," "shine like ony saip," etc.,—these and other idioms are well-known as occurring in the verse of Burns; but they may also be found in the verse of Dunbar, and probably in no single instance originated with him.

Such a comparison of language as is here rather suggested than instituted is not without interest, and might be made of value; of more popular interest, however, is the comparison of the genius of Burns with that of Dunbar in regard to their choice of sub-

ject. This it is proposed here briefly to point, not in the vague and general way, which would prove that hundreds of poets are very like each other because they all write upon the beauty of nature, and the rapture of wretchedness of love, and similar simple distractions; but by noting in Dunbar certain distinct and definite poems which directly or indirectly remind the critical reader of achievements by Burns on the same or very kindred themes. The comparison is not meant to be exhaustive, yet it will probably surprise the reader to learn, if he does not already know, that in Dunbar may be found the anticipation—we do not say the suggestion—of such well-known poems or themes by Burns as the following:—"Epistle to a Young Friend," "Death and Dr. Horn-book," "The Deil cam' Fiddling thro' the Toun," "Mary Morrison," "Macpherson's Farewell," "Auld Farmer's Salutation to His Auld Mare," "Address to Edinburgh," "Guid Morning to Your Majesty," "Green Grow the Rashes, O," "The Vision"—("Had I to Guid Advice but harket"), "A Winter Night," and certain pieces exemplifying that peculiar poetical somersault and recovery to which Burns has given the designation of *per contra*.

The anticipation of Burns' gnomic poem containing his advice to Andrew may be found in Dunbar's verses commencing "To dwell in Court, my friend." Each poet counsels his friend on the subjects of friendship, fortune, religion, etc. Only on the topic of love is the elder poet silent. "Aye free, aff-hand," says Burns—

"Aye free, aff-hand, your story tell  
When wi' a bosom crony,  
But still keep something to yourself,  
Ye scarcely tell to ony;"

and Dunbar offers the same cautious advice:—

"Beware whom to thy counsel thou disco'er,  
For truth dwells not aye for that truth appears;  
Put not thy honour into adventure,  
A friend may be thy foe as fortune steers."

Burns's advice on the subject of wealth is to wait assiduously upon Fortune—

"And gather gear by every wile  
That's justified by honour."

Dunbar's view of fickle fortune being the same, he gives the same advice—

"With all thy heart treat business and cure."

"Yet," says Burns—

"They wha fa' in fortune's strife  
Their fate we shouldna censure."

And Dunbar counsels his friend to "be no wise despiteful to the puir." Burns reflects that "a man may have an honest heart tho' poortith hourly stare him;" while Dunbar reminds his young friend to be patient though he possess no lairdship, "For hie virtue may stand in low estate." On religion both poets give the same advice—to avoid profane company and reverence the Creator. Burns's language is well known—

"Ne'er with wits profane to range,  
Be complaisance extended."

And—

"A correspondence fixed with Heaven  
Is sure a noble anchor."

Dunbar's language carries the same counsel—

"Hold God thy friend, ever stable by Him stand,  
He'll thee comfort in all misadventure."

And—

"In company choose honourable feres,  
But from vile folk withdraw thee far aside;  
The Psalmist says *cum sancto sanctus eris*,  
And he rules weel wha weel himself can guide."

Burns's Dr. Hornbook is notorious. But the keen eye of Dunbar also caught the character, and subjected it to the same style of handling. It is a satire with touches of grim humour on the arch-quack John Damian, *alias* French John, *alias* John-the-Leech, etc. Beginning with a murder in Italy, this wholesale homicide qualified in France, and finally set up and secured a general practice in Scotland. He was at once apothecary, physician, and surgeon. But he revelled in blood. His "garde-vyance" was crammed with irons and other "instruments for slaughter." "Where he let blude, it was laucher." "He left neither sick nor sair unslain" in France; and in Scotland—

"His practiks never were put to prief  
But sudden death, or great mischief!"

Dunbar's Deil, as he passed through the market, was not simply in search of an excise-man; nor did he just confine his operations to taverners, maltmen, and brewsters, and

those in any way connected with "the trade." Mahoun—so Dunbar calls him—took a wider sweep in the good old times. The clergy had the honour of first catching his eye; but he made little if any distinction of crafts or professions. He called his followers from all classes—merchants, goldsmiths, tailors, and souters, baxters, blacksmiths, fleshers, and fish-wives, the last-mentioned all in a body.

"A tailor said—'In a' this toun  
Be there a better weel-made gown  
I give me to the Fiend all free;  
'Gramercy, tailor!' said Mahoun,  
'Renounce thy God, an' come to me!'"

The measure of "Mary Morrison" was known to Dunbar. The prevailing tone and the characteristic sentiment of Burns's poem will be found in Dunbar's Lines to a Lady, beginning, "My heart's treasure, and sweet assurèd foe." Burns entreats for pity at least, and finds comfort in the reflection that—

"A thocht ungentle canna be  
The thocht o' Mary Morrison."

Dunbar, too, entreats for ruth, with the "tears falling from his face;" and, though less hopeful than Burns, is not hopeless.

"For how should any gentle heart endure  
To see this sicht in any creature?"

Dunbar's Donald Owre, that "fell strong traitor" who "mair falset had than other fowre," was the Macpherson of his day. But Dunbar's "Epitaph for Donald," it must be owned, shows no glimpse of that admiration for the daring and dauntless freebooter which is more than suggested in Burns's "Macpherson's Farewell." The fault, however, was not Dunbar's, for the earlier freebooter, though like the later, he lived a life of "sturt and strife" (the phrase occurs in Dunbar), and "died by treacherie," had not that redeeming touch of grace which Carlyle notes in Macpherson, and which probably recommended his character to the "strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling of Burns."

"Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,  
Sae dauntingly gaed he;  
He played a spring, and danced it round,  
Below the gallows-tree."

The reference is to the air which bears his name, said to have been composed by Macpherson the night before his execution—

proof, as Carlyle remarks, of a fibre of poetry in his savage heart. "On the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain, and all the ignominy and despair which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss."

"The Petition of the Gray Horse" of Dunbar may well stand beside Burns's record of the long and faithful service of the auld mare, grown

"Dowie, stiff, and crazy,  
And thy auld hide as white's a daisy."

There is much of the same tender humour in both poems, heightened in the case of Dunbar's by self-identification with the Gray Horse. When the auld mare was a filly, we are told—

"She set weel down a shapely shank  
As e'er tread yird,  
And could hae flown out-owre a stank  
Like ony bird."

The Gray Horse, when a colt, was also "i' the foremost rank"—

"When I was young and into ply,  
And would cast gambols to the sky,  
I had been bocht in realms near-by,  
Had I consentit to be sauld."

In the end the happier lot was the auld mare's—

"Thinkna, my auld trusty servan',  
That now perhaps thou's less deservin',  
And thy auld days may end in stervin';  
For my last fow  
A heapit stimpart—I'll reserve ane  
Laid by for you."

The Gray Horse, on the other hand, was left lamenting—

"I have run lang furth in the field,  
On pastures that are plain and peeld:  
I might be now ta'en in for eild.

My mane is turnèd into white,  
And thereof ye have a' the wyte:  
When ither horse had bran to bite  
I gat but girse," etc.

Burns's Address to "Edina, Scotia's Darling Seat," is well known. Dunbar's Address to London, the "A *per se* of towns," is pitched in the same lofty strain of compliment and admiration, but his address to Edinburgh is far from complimentary—

"May nane pass thro' your principal gates  
For stink of haddocks and of skates,

For cries of carlines and debates,  
For 'fensive flytings of defame:  
Think ye not shame,  
Before strangers of all estates,  
That sic dishonour hurt your name?"

In his address to King George—"Guid Morning to your Majesty!"—Burns, it will be remembered, reminds the King that he is his humble debtor for "neither pension, post, nor place." Dunbar, too, besides sending Royalty his good wishes for a New Year, makes no less bold a declaration—

"Though that I, amang the lave,  
Unworthy be a place to have,  
Or in their number to be told—  
As lang in mind my work shall hold  
As ever ony of them a',  
Supposin' my rewaird be sma'!"

Perhaps the most notable passage in "Green Grow the Rashes" is the last stanza—

"Auld Nature swears the lovely dears,  
Her noblest wark she classes, O;  
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,  
And then she made the lasses, O."

Precisely the same sentiment is in Dunbar's panegyric poem addressed to Queen Margaret:—

"Of thy fair figure Nature might rejoice  
That so thee carved with all her curious slight;  
She has thee made this very world's choice,  
Showing on thee her handicraft and might,  
To see how fair she could depaint a wight."

In the first "Duan" of his "Vision," Burns for the moment regrets that he had surrendered his life to poesy; he backward mused on wasted time, found he had nothing to show for the past but a few foolish rhymes, and contrasted his present condition—"half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit"—with what might have been had he listened to gude advice. Dunbar was subject to similar fits of reminiscence and dependency:—

"In some part on myself I 'plain  
When other folk flatter and feign;  
Alas! I can but ballads breif—  
Sic folly held my bridle rein:  
Excess of thocht does me mischief."

Some points of resemblance will be found between Burns's "A Winter Night" and Dunbar's noble "Meditation in Winter"—the situation is the same, and similar melancholy thoughts course through the minds of the sleepless poets. Burns's use of the *Per*



*Contra* is illustrated in "Tam Samson's Elegy:" Dunbar has brilliant examples of it in his poems on James Doig, and on the Souters and Tailors of Edinburgh.

Burns, it is safe to say, was unacquainted with the poetry of Dunbar, if we except those

specimens of it which are included in Ramsay's "Evergreen." The similarity in several important relations between the two poets is the more remarkable, and well illustrates the consistency and continuity of our literary history.

### XVIII.—BURNS'S NATAL DAY.

*From the Glasgow Herald, Jan. 27, 1894.*

OF all the great Scottish days marked in the calendar, the 25th January is to Scotchmen by far the most memorable. We are not forgetting the world-shaking day at Bannockburn, with its far-reaching influence on national character. Nor do we forget the sad event of Flodden, which also has had a long and profound influence, especially upon the poetic sentiment of the people of the Border. Both days have been immensely valuable—the one for maintaining through victory over oppression, the other for refining, through sorrow, the nation's patriotic spirit. These battles were, however, old events in 1759, though they lived in the memory and tingled or saddened the blood. Nature's gift of Burns to Scotland was worth many victories, a fact still evident in Burns's living gift of song to his countrymen, and to all men to whom song is a source of redemption from sorrow and despair. The ceremonies on Thursday night in many parts of the home kingdoms and throughout our Colonial Empire will furnish the annual testimony to the wide and deep influence of our National Bard in the domain of poetry, morals, and political independence. As an inspiring and regenerating force, the work of Burns is far from being exhausted—is still, in fact, a spell to renew hope, courage, and enterprise. Measureless quantities of prose—and even good prose—will be forgotten when the songs of Burns are still fresh and green and sweet in the universal memory. Even excess of admiration is better than cynicism on a day like this. The occasion is not one of mere eating and drinking. Not even of the more ancient Burns celebrations can it be said, and in recent years much has occurred to suggest to lovers of Burns other means of honouring

his memory. There are at least two clubs in the Valley of the Clyde who have hit upon an excellent method of planting Burns, so to say, in the minds of the younger generation. These clubs are those of Bridgeton and Greenock, which annually give prizes to school children who exhibit under examination a superior knowledge of Burns, and who show special talent in reciting his poems and singing his songs. The Bridgeton Club, which was, we believe, the first to adopt this happy system, gives a gold medal annually to the best Burns student. This club is also accumulating money for the purpose, at an early period, of founding in the University a Burns bursary, or something of the sort. These things show that the Burns Clubs need not be fruitless. Professor Masson, an admirable "Burns man," has been suggesting to an Edinburgh press interviewer that the Burns Clubs might utilise some of their time in studying the earlier literature of Scotland, covering the period of Barbour, James I., Dunbar, Henrysoun, Gavin Douglas, and Sir David Lindsay. They might, he thinks, even co-operate in the production of a series of volumes of these early poets, modernised in spelling for the general reader, whom the Scottish Text Society do not cultivate. This could be done in honour of Burns, and perhaps a finer compliment could not be paid to his memory. These fine old Scottish "makers" were not merely the forerunners of Burns. They were much more—especially Dunbar, whose independent poetic spirit was to the Bard a fountain of inspiration. Professor Masson's suggestion is one which the Burns Clubs might well take into consideration, with nothing but profit and honour to themselves.



## XIX.—A VISIT TO A GRAND-DAUGHTER OF BURNS.

MR. WM. CAMPBELL, formerly of the *Scotsman*, N.Y., but for many years a journalist of high standing in Canada, while in Guelph lately on business, was fortunate enough to meet Mrs. Jane Burns, or Brown, wife of Mr. Thos. Brown, of that place, and grand-daughter of Scotland's National Bard, through his eldest son Robert. Mr. Campbell in narrating the circumstance writes as follows :—I was no sooner informed by Mr. W. J. Little, Baker and Confectioner, that a grand-daughter of the Poet was in Guelph, than I begged of him to procure me an introduction, to which he willingly consented. On reaching the residence of the lady we found, to my disappointment, that Mrs. Brown was from home. I was determined, however, that I would see her before leaving Guelph, and with that object in view, and after the shades of night had fallen, I again walked down to her residence. This time I was fortunate, and not only found the lady, but also her husband and only surviving daughter, a handsome girl of twelve summers.

Mrs. Brown received me very kindly, and on my informing her that my object in calling was to see the articles in her possession which belonged to her gitted ancestor, she consented to show them to me, remarking "Ah! they are now few in number and scarcely worth showing." "Do not say that," said I, "for the smallest thing is worth showing, even though it were only the leaf of a book once handled by Burns." The lady responded to my enthusiastic remarks by a pleasant smile and proceeded to lay before me her treasures, regaling my attentive ear meanwhile with sundry remarks either about the Poet himself or the things in her possession. Having learned from Mr. Little that Mrs. Brown had a bottle and glass which belonged to Burns, and which came into the possession of her father after the Poet's death, I asked to be shown it. Mr. Brown at once proceeded to a receptacle at hand and took therefrom the articles in question, remarking "Ye'll no only see them but ye'se get an opportunity o' drinkin' a drap whiskey oot o' them." While I gazed on the precious relics I was carried back in imagination to

the time when Burns in his quiet home on the farm at Ellisland, or in Dumfries, had "preed the barley bree" out of the glass now before me—one of those old-fashioned half-gill glasses of cut crystal which one seldom sees now-a-days. My reverie was broken in upon by Mr. Brown, who remarked "But ye ha'ena taen ony o' the whiskey yet! ye maun tak' a drap frae the Poet's bottle." Accordingly I poured out a small quantity and placéd the glass to my lips. My sensations at this moment were of a strange yet pleasant nature, and I set down the glass with a feeling of peculiar satisfaction that my lips had touched the same glass as those of the immortal Burns.

Mrs. Brown showed me other relics of the poet, and among them two volumes of the "History of Great Britain," which had been rebound and presented by the poet's eldest son to a Mrs. M'Kendrick. On the fly-leaf of one of the volumes is the following inscription:—"This book which belonged to the library of the Scottish bard, and which has been rebound, is presented to Mrs. M'Kendrick by the bard's eldest son, ROBERT BURNS." Dumfries, January 8th, 1845.

Mrs. Brown pointed out to me an oil painting of her father which was hanging on the wall behind her, and I was at once struck with the remarkable resemblance which she bears to him. Mrs. Brown has also a portrait of her father on glass inserted in a gold brooch, and on the back of the brooch are three locks of plaited hair cut from the heads of the poet's three sons by her own hand. This brooch Mrs. Brown values very highly.

And now just a few words about Miss Brown. When introduced to her my attention was at once rivetted by her eyes, and I involuntarily exclaimed "She has got the very eyes of Burns—the dark glowing eye, of which Sir Walter Scott and many others spoke so admiringly." It was not mere fancy that possessed me, for every one, I am told, notices the fact.

And having spent a most delightful hour I took my leave, Mrs. Brown, before I left, presenting me with a photograph of herself and her daughter.

XX.—PROF. MASSON ON BURNS AND BURNS CLUBS.

*From the SCOTTISH LEADER, January 25th, 1894.*

IN view of the fact that to-day is the Burns Anniversary, the *Leader* commissioner yesterday called on Professor Masson in the hope of hearing his opinions upon Burns Clubs and their doings. Nor was the hope disappointed, in spite of a modest unwillingness on the Professor's part to say much on a subject which he had not thoroughly cogitated beforehand.

"To tell the truth," says the Professor, "I fear I don't know very much about what the Burns clubs are doing at present, or whether they do anything in addition to dining together once a year, though indeed there can be no better kind of conviviality among Scotsmen than meeting to celebrate the birthday of Burns. I have only been three or four times to the annual dinner of the Edinburgh Burns Club, and I cannot say what the nature of its functions may be. However, I do remember one instance in which a Burns Club certainly does something of a most praiseworthy kind to widen the knowledge of the poet. That is the Greenock Club, with whom I dined two years ago, and who boast, I believe, that they are the oldest association of the kind in Scotland. They were founded in 1802, only six years after Burns's death. Now I think that they use part of their funds in giving prizes in the local schools to the boys and girls who have the best knowledge of Burns, for essays or recitations, I suppose. I can't say whether any other clubs do the same thing, but it is certainly an example well worthy of being imitated. The clubs could do nothing better than to encourage the study of Burns and Scott in schools. I make that conjunction because Burns himself would have been delighted with it."

"Undoubtedly, Professor. Is there nothing more you can suggest to which Burns Clubs might devote their energies in addition to the gloryfying of the bard?"

"Well," said Professor Masson, with a grim smile wrinkling his pleasant face, "You see you have rather taken me by surprise, and anything I say is, so to speak, impromptu. Still, I have often thought that

perhaps the Burns Clubs might utilize some of their time in studying the earlier literature of Scotland, and so get a notion of Burns in his true chronological place. At present we are perhaps a little apt to regard him as the beginning of Scots literature, with nothing behind him. Whereas the truth is that Scotland has had a period of literary activity in which she was decidedly ahead of contemporary England. Of course I refer to the period begun by Barbour and James I., and continued by Dunbar and Henrysoun, Gavin Douglas, and Sir David Lindsay. These great names are comparatively unknown to the general reader. Now I should think that our Burns Clubs might profitably betake themselves to the study of these men, as well as of the later names in our literature, instead of giving all their time to Burns."

"How would you suggest they should study them?"

"Well, for one thing, there are countless speeches on Burns delivered every year in proposing the Immortal Memory. And among these it is only the very exceptional speaker that can say anything new. As a rule they are just a stream of old ideas, with plenty of quotations. No doubt it is an excellent thing that much should be said about Burns, but I should think that some of the time given to these speeches might be as usefully spent on a topic drawn from the earlier literature. There is another thing, too, that has long been a notion of mine, though I don't suppose any publisher nowadays would carry it out. That is a complete Scottish *Corpus Poeticum*, something on the plan of Chalmers' British Poets. A series of quite a few volumes would contain it, in double columns if need be. You see, the Scottish Text Society has done excellent work in the editing of the old writers, but it is scarcely for the general reader. Why could not the Burns Clubs co-operate in the production of such a series in honour of Burns, the chief name in it? I would modernize nothing in it but the spelling, and make the volumes as cheap and readable as

might be. Well, that is only a suggestion ; but you asked me what I thought the Burns Clubs might do."

"At any rate, there is no decrease in the enthusiasm for Burns, is there?"

"On the contrary, it seems to be steadily growing. All over the world, wherever a Scotsman is to be found, Burns is held in honour. And if you ask the question, I should think it will always be so. Burns cannot die. His songs have so much of the true lyrical note that they seem immortal. At the same time, you are to remember that fewer people are able to read him now than was the case fifty years ago."

"How is that? do you mean they are forgetting their Scots?"

"That is so. In many schools I notice now that, whereas a generation back the boys and girls would be taught in English and relapse into the good broad Doric as soon as they got out to play, they now talk English of a sort all the time. Scots is certainly growing less used every year. Still it is not likely that we shall ever forget how to read Burns. His language is much easier to understand than the Border dialect, which philologists have agreed to choose as the type of classical Scots. It is easier than Sir Walter's, too, in the parts where he introduces rustic talk. Still, Burns is stiff enough in places. I remember a linguist, Thomas Watts, on the staff of the British Museum—he is dead now—who, though an Englishman, had studied Burns very closely from a philological point of view. Whenever a Scotsman came to the Museum, Watt's favourite amusement was to say to him, 'You're Scotch, aren't you? Well, I wish you would explain a couple of lines in Burns to me. These are they :

'A daimen icker in a thrave  
'S a sma' request.'

That almost always beat them!"

"Still, even an Englishman can read Burns as a rule with a little trouble: don't you think so?"

"Oh, decidedly. Though even natives sometimes take objection to his language. There is 'Scots wha hae,' for instance, which Mr. Andrew Lang, by the way, took occasion to object to when he addressed the Edin-

burgh Burns Club. I suppose he doesn't care for the spirit of patriotism that glows through it. Well, Dr. Murray, the editor of the 'New English Dictionary,' you know, has criticised that as bad Scots of the period. He says it should be 'Scots at has,' the old plural form that looks like a singular. What a grammatical nicety that is! Surely any man in a moment of excitement might be allowed to say 'Scots wha hae!'" and the Professor rolled it out with feeling in the deep sonorous voice that makes it such a treat to hear him read a choice old poem to his class.

"Your memory must go back to many Burns anniversaries, Professor?" asked the journalist, after a little pause.

"Yes, a good many. Perhaps the most important is the Burns centenary—let me see—that must have been in 1859. I was in London then, and attended the great gathering there. There were similar meetings all over the country—in Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and so on. The event of the evening that I remember best was the poem contributed by Miss Knox, the lady who afterwards wrote under the name of Isa Craig."

"Mr. Carlyle didn't go to that meeting, I suppose."

"No, not to the centenary. He was a tremendous enthusiast about Burns, though, as you may understand from his essay. He was never so happy as when reciting Burns, to whom he did full justice. *The Jolly Beggars* was a special favourite. He used to talk most affectionately of Burns, and recall with interest the fact that the two lives had overlapped, though only for a year or two. It is a curious thing that Burns always led him on to talk of his father, although old Carlyle could scarcely be brought to read Burns at all, and would have resented the suggestion that they had anything in common. Carlyle once went to a Burns dinner, you may remember, and made the principal speech. It was when he was living at Craigenputtock, and the dinner was at Dumfries. You'll find the story in his *Reminiscences*."

"The association of the two names, Burns and Carlyle, must have been most interesting.



Which do you suppose will live the longest in our literature?"

Professor Masson smiled and shook his head. "Who can tell?" he answered. "This of course you must bear in mind, that poetry in the nature of things has a better chance of survival than prose. The lyrical passionate nature of Burns's work, so much of it pure song, gives it an exceptional chance of keeping the public ear. Then, too, work which is mainly polemic, like so much of Carlyle's, is apt to be forgotten when the nation has absorbed the vital part of it into its own flesh and blood. But it would be presumptuous to prophesy as to either out-living the other."

"I suppose there is no one left now who knew Burns?"

"There scarcely can be. The memories are all at second-hand. For instance, I knew Mrs. Candlish, the mother of the famous divine. She was Miss Smith, one of the celebrated Mauchline belles.

'Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is braw.'

Both she and old Mr. Candlish were intimate with the poet. It is curious to think, however, as I often do, that if Burns had lived to old age, to the age of Carlyle for instance, I myself might have known him. I have amused myself somewhere in one of my books by fancying what his life might have been. When he died in 1796 his opinions were getting to be more and more radical, so that he was afraid that his gaugership might have been taken away from him. At the same time, his prose style was forming itself better and better. Now, if he had lived, what is more likely than that he would have gone up to Edinburgh, and there found his work on one of the numerous newspapers that sprang up in opposition to the Government about the beginning of the century?

As it was, he sometimes wrote for the *Morning Chronicle*. Suppose he had lived on to 1840, when he would have been 81; what is more conceivable than that the city would have sent him to Parliament after the Reform Bill, and before his death he might have represented Edinburgh beside Macaulay? But, of course, to hint this is profanation."

"There would not have been much more poetry, then?"

"I don't say that. Burns must always have written poetry. But I don't think he would have done anything different in kind from what we possess. He was not a Milton, to produce a *Paradise Lost* at 59. Only, speculation is rather vain."

"One last point, and I have done, Professor. What do you think about the taunt our English friends are fond of making, that we celebrate Burns only by dining, and that we debar ourselves from all approach to a critical spirit about him?"

"Well, as to the dining, it is surely a respectable and pleasant way of celebrating an event; and it could have no better excuse than the Burns anniversary. It is pleasant, by the way, to notice how even the people who are most opposed to his praises of strong liquors agree that his memory should be celebrated. And, as to the question of criticism, I don't think it matters so much. Fault finding is always easy; it is admiration that is difficult. No doubt some of Burns's poems are better than others. But in answer to this kind of remark, I am always tempted to quote Goethe, who, though he did a lot of criticism himself, said, near the end of his life: 'If I call bad bad, what does it profit? If I call good bad, I do much harm. The safest thing is not to criticise others, but for each to do the best he can himself.' Perhaps, after all, that is the best answer."

## XXI.—THE ELDER DISRAELI ON BURNS.

BY JOHN MUIR, F.S.A., Scot.

A MOST laborious author was old Isaac Disraeli, father of that great statesman, the Earl of Beaconsfield. His works deal entirely with literary history, and his specula-

tions on the follies of the wise are second only to the wisdom of the sages themselves, whose idiosyncracies he has probed to the very core, revealing the inmost workings of



that strange, indefinable, but unmistakable quality called genius. His works treat of every conceivable subject connected with literature, and his books are repositories of erudition, to which a very large number of writers have been indebted for much of their learning; but, like Burton, who has been similarly pillaged, and notably by Sterne, authors have not always been careful to acknowledge the extent of their obligations.

The work by which the elder Disraeli will always be best known, because it is the work which has made the deepest impression on the mind of the age, is the "*Curiosities of Literature*." It was the first revelation to the British people that they possessed materials for historical and critical investigations hardly inferior in value to the celebrated *Memoirs of the French*; and it was also one of the earliest attempts to vindicate the memory of the Stuarts, but more especially the first Charles, from the odium which had been accumulated upon them ever since the Revolution. More than one of the *Waverley Novels* were obviously suggested by the "*Curiosities of Literature*;" and to that work our modern writers of historical romance have been far more deeply indebted than they have ever yet acknowledged.

"*The Quarrels of Authors*," the "*Calamities of Authors*," and the "*Illustrations of the Literary Character*," though more immediately connected with literary history, are everywhere marked with the characteristic feelings and sentiments which rendered the author an earnest advocate and zealous pleader for the hapless house of Stuart, a theme which engaged the attention of our poet, who has left some beautiful poems, and some important prose passages, inspired by the same passion.

Rare old Isaac! how I cherish your venerable name! How many pleasant days and nights have we two spent roaming over the Elysian fields of literature, discussing all manner of subjects, and often dropping in upon some favourite author, and without being observed taking a seat in his study and seeing his creations assume shape in our very presence! Have we not, too, been privileged to see the eye of a favourite poet, in a fine frenzy rolling, while we were tempted

to peep over his shoulder, and see the coruscations of genius and the inspirations of poetry play around the pen in the act of composing some of the master-pieces of literary art we have read and re-read, and always with undiminished delight and increased wonder.

Who has not at some period of his life fancied himself a genius—at the very lowest wished himself a genius, and above all, a literary genius? Ah! if I were only a genius, then might latter-day prophets expect the fulfilment of their dreams and the millenium be as good as come! And so young genius sighs and pines. To such an one I say, read Isaac Disraeli on "*The Literary Character, or the History of Men of Genius, drawn from their own Feelings and Confessions*." After that, if you are still undecided, let me tell you on the authority of this erudite Hebrew, that you have no genius at all, at least for literature. My learned friend will tell you all about the feelings, aspirations, and modes of working of genius—in short, he will give you the entire intellectual history of nearly every distinguished man and woman that has ever lived, and suffered, and wrought in this alien sphere of existence called the world. If your experience coincide with those narrated in his volume, to such an extent you may be justified in thinking that you are one of the immortals. If you feel no interest in his book; if you feel that you cannot sympathise with what he has to tell you, or the class of persons he writes about, or that you have lived an entirely different life from any here recorded, then, I fear, your case is utterly hopeless, and perhaps you had better take Grant Allen's advice, and don't.

I am accustomed to call old Isaac Disraeli the Cuvier of literature, and perhaps it will assist the reader to view him in that light for the time being. Just as the great French naturalist could reconstruct a monster from the fossil remains of the animal, so Disraeli created his work from the literary fragments and memorials of great men. He himself was no genius, but a man of great talents and uncommon industry. Moreover, he had the rare virtue of knowing a man of genius when he met him; and, as Carlyle says, it

takes a kind of hero to recognise a hero when he sees him; so, on that very account, I am half inclined at times to rank old Isaac as one of my special heroes.

In his search after great men and the records of their intellectual life, it was almost impossible that he could overlook Robert Burns and the poet's Edinburgh journal, that most remarkable document, unfortunately but half published when the elder Disraeli issued the last revised edition of his work. But even had he perused the journal in its entirety, it is more than doubtful if he could have appraised it more accurately than he does in the following passage, which, as it is not very well known to students of Burns, I take the liberty of transcribing in full:—

"Once we were nearly receiving from the hand of genius the most curious sketches of the temper, the irascible humours, the delicacy of soul—even its shadowiness—from the warm *shozzes* of Burns, when he began a diary of the heart, a narrative of characters and events, and a chronology of his emotions. It was natural for such a creature of sensation and passion to project such a regular task, but quite impossible for him to get through it. The paper book which he conceived would have recorded all these things, turns out, therefore, but a very imperfect document. Imperfect as it was, it has been thought proper not to give it entire. Yet there we view a warm original mind, when he first stepped into the polished circles of society, discovering that he could no longer "pour out his bosom, his every thought and fleeting fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man, or from the unavoid-

able imperfections attending human nature, of on day repenting his confidence." This was the first lesson he learned at Edinburgh, and it was as a substitute for such a human being that he bought a paper book to keep under lock and key, "a security at least equal," says he, "to the bosom of any friend whatever." Let the man of genius pause over the fragments of this paper book! It will instruct as much as any open confession of a criminal at the moment he is about to suffer. No man was more afflicted with that miserable pride, the infirmity of men of imagination, which is so jealously alive, even among their best friends, as to exact a perpetual acknowledgment of their powers. Our poet, with all his gratitude and veneration for "the noble Glencairn," was "wounded to the soul" because his Lordship showed "so much attention, engrossing attention, to the only blockhead at the table; the whole company consisted of his Lordship, Dunderpate, and myself." This Dunderpate, who dined with Lord Glencairn, might have been a useful citizen, who, in some points, is of more value than an irritable bard. Burns was equally offended with another patron who was also a literary brother, Dr. Blair. At the moment he too appeared to be neglecting the irritable poet "for the mere carcase of greatness, or when his eye measured the difference of their point of elevation; I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, [He might have added, 'except a good deal of painful contempt'] 'What do I care for him or his pomp either.'" "Dr. Blair's vanity is proverbially known among his acquaintances," adds Burns, at the moment that the solitary haughtiness of his own genius had entirely escaped his self-observation.

## XXII.—BURNS AS EXCISEMAN AND STUDENT.

*From the GLASGOW EVENING TIMES.*

IN passing judgment on Burns as the candid poet and wayward child of genius, we are apt to forget that he spent more than six years of his short life in the Civil Service, and that his official superiors have borne excellent testimony to his ability and diligence in that

prosaic capacity. His visit to Edinburgh—1786-7—no doubt suggested the Excise to him as a *dernier ressort* after farming, to which he had been bred. On his Highland tour—1787—he met a Commissioner of Excise, Robert Graham of Fintry, as a fellow-

guest at Blair Castle, and him he resolved to use as the ladder of his vaulting ambition. His patron belonged to a family that had owned for generations a small estate near Dundee, but this he had sold about 1780 to an Edinburgh W.S., the grandfather of Thomas Erskine, the latitudinarian lay-preacher and friend of Carlyle. The purchaser changed the name to Linlathen, which allowed Graham to retain the territorial designation of Fintry. With Graham Burns always remained on most friendly terms, and to Mrs. Graham—sister to the Duchess of Athole—he sent the first copy of “Mary in Heaven.” Burns applied to Graham for a commission early in 1788, but he hung up his plan, partly to see how Ellisland was to turn out, partly to get settled in the Dumfries district, and thus combine farming with gauging. By May, 1788, he had finished his “Excise instructions,” and in the following September “the commission is in his pocket.” He would start with £50 a year, but would have to keep a horse. When he settled in Dumfries he got his travelling expenses paid. How he regarded his expectations comes out in a letter to Ainslie, June, 1788—“I look to the Excise scheme as a certainty of maintenance—a maintenance! luxury, to what either Mrs. Burns or I was born to.” He was appointed in November, 1789, and took to harness at once, telling a friend that no less than an order from the Board of Excise at Edinburgh was necessary before he could have so much time as to meet him in Ayrshire. Gauging was vastly fatiguing in those days, but Burns tempered it with *bonhomie* and good sense. Trying to find a simile for his busy life, he hits on Satan, roaming about like a roaring lion, “*searching* whom he may devour.” Burns had in his purview not only alcohol, but candles, tobacco, leather, and salt, for these were the palmy days of indirect taxation. As Hogg says in his “Watie and Geordie’s Review of Politics:”—

“Tell na me o’ puir folks’ freedom,  
If ane escapes the taxes a’,  
Then that same ane has nocht ava,  
Our hats, our claes, our drink, our meat,  
Our snuff, our ’bacca, shoon o’ our feet,  
Our candles, watches, horses, even  
The very blessed licht o’ heaven!  
Our dogs—but now, for want o’ patience,  
How I could curse thae vile taxations!”

Geordie had to hang his collie, Dusty, because he could not afford the 5s. tax.

There being many farm and village industries then that are now unknown, an exciseman had numerous petty duties to perform. Fairs, too, were very numerous, and these offered a strong temptation to sell without a license, a custom of long standing. At the great Ru’glen horse fairs every house could be turned into a tavern for the nonce. In addition to all this, smuggling was very prevalent. The official superior of Burns was Alex. Findlater, in whose district he was latterly the first of six officers. Findlater was the son of the minister of West Linton, who wrote towards the end of the century an excellent account of sheep-farming, then coming into great vogue. He long survived Burns, dying in 1839, as collector at Glasgow. In testifying to the conduct of Burns as an officer, he describes him as exemplary in his attentions, ever jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance. Slight irregularities, occurring near the end, could be accounted for by accumulating infirmities. “I never saw him but in hours of business, quite himself and capable of discharging the duties of his office, nor was he ever known to drink by himself, or seen to indulge in liquor in the forenoon. Set down in the evening with friends whom he liked, he was apt to prolong the social hour, but in his family I have never seen him otherwise than attentive and affectionate in a high degree.”

One of the pleasantest aspects in which Burns reveals himself to us is his life-long thirst for mental improvement. His range and depth of reading are marvellous. We may regret his mistaken worship of the correct school of Pope and Addison, but he sinned in the company of Smollett, Hume, Robertson, Blair, and Scott, whose highest ambition it was to write English. The outcome of this in Burns’s case is seen in his mechanical efforts to perfect himself as a letter-writer. To the polite serials of the day—brood of the *Spectator*—he is devoted, though, to his no small regret, *they are so entirely English*. Mackenzie, “The Man of Feeling,” now dead as Julius Cæsar, Burns thinks greatly superior to Addison in tenderness and pathos. From the letters to Moore,



Mrs. Dunlop, and Peter Hill, we know Burns as a devotee of the *belles lettres*. Fiction he knows well, promising a comparative view of Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, and Moore—save the mark! The drama is fondly studied, and, under the inspiration of the Dumfries thespis, something in that line is projected as future work for the poet. In pure poetry he loves the best models:—"I often take up a volume of my Spenser;" "I want a Shakespeare." He jocularly says how, in a fit of spleen, he studies the character of Satan from a pocket "Paradise Lost." Cowper is with him in excise rides, and Thomson, Gray, and Percy's "Reliques" he knows well. He has all a Scot's love for theology and metaphysics. "I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible. It is really a glorious book." To an old friend he humorously says:—

I've sent you here, by Johnnie Simson,  
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on;  
Smith, wi' his *sympathetic feeling*,  
And Reid, to *common sense* appealing.  
But, hark ye, friend! I charge you strictly,  
Peruse them, and return them quickly,  
For now I'm grown sae cursed dooce,  
I pray and ponder butt the house;  
My shins, my lane, I there sit roastin',  
Perusing Bunyan, Brown, and Boston.

To improve himself in the Excise he studies the "Wealth of Nations," and Dugald Stewart saw in his fun his own pet theory of the association of ideas. By reading translations he labours to make up for his want of a classical education, and can criticise most sensibly the Georgics and Eneid, and Virgil's borrowings from Homer. While too much of his substance went for objects unworthy, he must have spent a good deal on books. He pays, for example, 3s. 6d. for a map of Scotland on rollers, and £2 for a Family Bible, adorned with over 300 engravings. Burns's interest in reading was gratified by the founding of the Dumfries Library, September, 1792. From the first he was one of its supporters, securing donations and presenting books himself, of which one, "De Lolme on the British Constitution," has a history of its own. Early in the morning after it was presented, Burns came to the Provost's bedside, anxious to see this volume, as he feared he had written something on it

"which might bring him into trouble." He pasted down the fly-leaf over this, but some stains of ink, which the accompanying photograph brings out, betrayed what was written on the back of the engraved portrait of the author. When the leaf was held up to the light it was legible. The sting lay in the tail, *until they find a better*, and of this Burns, on reflection, was afraid. It was a time of undoubted terrorism. Robert Chambers remembered how, so lately as 1817, an emissary of the Lord Advocate traced out the subscribers to a Liberal newspaper then started in Edinburgh.

He had too high a standard of mental culture to neglect the training of his children, at a time, too, when he is often thought of as the unworthy father and confirmed sot. The best testimony here is that of James Gray, a native of Duns, who, from a working shoemaker, raised himself to the rectorship of Dumfries Grammar School (1794). He speaks with authority as private tutor to Burns's children. Of their father, he says that he did not think it enough to send his children to school, but was their private instructor, and even at that early age took great pains in training them to habits of thought and reflection—a sacred duty he never relaxed till the period of his last illness. With his eldest boy he read many favourite poets and some of the best historians, and he helped him in Latin by insisting on the best English in his translations. He speaks strongly of the poet's steadiness, saying that he "frequently found him at home, storing the boy's mind with the poets Shakespeare and Gray. To the end of his life reading was his favourite amusement. He seemed to have the poets by heart. There never was any decay in the powers of his mind."

If only the men and women whom Burns came in contact with had been intellectually and morally as great and influential as the books he read, he might have presented to us now a personality as complete almost as that of Sir Walter himself—that knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. At the same time, do we realise how much, in Burns as he was, we owe to that artistic temperament and reckless candour by which the lustre of his brief life has been now bedimmed, now illumined?



## XXIII.—RECENT GERMAN WORKS ON BURNS.\*

THE art of translation is a modern art. The Greeks knew nothing of it. The Romans, of course, executed translations from the writings of the Greek authors, but not quite in the same spirit as that in which the modern scholars undertake and carry out their labours of transferring the writings of an author from one language into another. In the ancient world, the then existing nations and their literatures were so little known to each other that there was hardly any need for interpreters. In the Middle Ages, translation was an honour accorded only to the Bible and the Greek and Latin classics. Subsequently it took the form of a posthumous distinction, when it was considered as a proof that the author's place in literature was conceded.

The modern spirit is nothing if not cosmopolitan. No sooner is an author of merit recognised than the translator, like the interviewer, is on his track; and we are progressing so rapidly that the translator, to keep pace with the times, has taken to translating the works of living authors—has become, indeed, as necessary to literature as the original writer himself.

It was hardly to be expected, therefore—indeed, it was not even to be hoped—that Burns would escape the attention of foreign students of Scottish poetry; and so our readers will not be surprised to learn that since 1830, when Goethe, in the "Vorwort zu Schillers Leben aus dem Englischen von T. Carlyle," earnestly recommended Burns to his countrymen, the Germans have gone on multiplying translations of, and miscellaneous works on, the poet to such an extent that his bibliographers have apparently abandoned in hopeless despondency the task of keeping a record of them for purposes of reference. Students of Burns in translation have great reason to complain of the deficiencies of the bibliographies of the poet in this respect. But these imperfections may be attributed to two causes—first, they may be due to the

fact that the bibliographers are not yet acquainted with translations of Burns into foreign languages, or, if they are, they do not consider them of any great importance; second, the deficiency may be due to the extreme difficulty of getting access to the more important Burnsiana published in the various countries of Europe. Yet, with a little trouble, and a moderate expenditure of British coin, the thing becomes comparatively easy. The result of our own labours, we are aware, form but a scanty enough contribution to the subject; but even a little information is surely better than none at all.

The large number of translations of Burns in almost every European language cannot be accounted for on the supposition that his poetical compositions are easily rendered into a foreign idiom, and therefore that they are a tempting bait on which amateur philologists may hook their mediocrities. On the contrary, few authors present greater difficulties than those to be found in the pages of our national bard. Burns himself, we think, was not without an unconscious understanding of the difficulties his translators would have to encounter. In his poem "The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer," there occurs this verse:—

"Sages their solemn een may steek,  
An' raise a philosophic reek,  
An' physically causes seek,  
In clime an' season;  
But tell me whisky's name in Greek,  
I'll tell the reason."

This is a poser indeed. He would be a sage of the kind worth going far to see who could tell whisky's name in Greek. The wisest man, we fancy, would require to "steek his een" for a long time, and raise a considerable volume of philosophic reek, before he could answer the poet's question. As every schoolboy knows, it is impossible to tell whisky's name in Greek, any more than we could translate the word "po'ket" into that language, for the simple reason that in the

\* (1) Robert Burns's "Gedichte in Auswahl" Deutsch von Gustave Legerlotz. 1889. (2) Robert Burns's "Gedichte in Auswahl." Deutsch von Gustave Legerlotz. Zweite Auflage. 1893. ("Selections from Burns's Poems," translated into German. Second Edition).

dresses of the Greeks there were no pockets, and consequently no word for that most indispensable accessory of modern attire ; neither had they any whisky—a thing to be regretted, as some may think.

The lines from Burns we have taken the liberty of printing in italics to sum up the difficulty with regard to the poet's matter most admirably. The difficulty, in this respect, which Burns's translators have to face is precisely that pookingly instanced by the poet—to tell whisky's name in the language into which the translation is to be made ; and the word whisky is only a single example out of many that might be cited of the numerous words and phrases used by Burns which conveyed ideas and shades of thought, the equivalents for which do not exist in the languages of other nations. So much for the matter.

With regard to the form of Burns's poetical creations, the difficulties, if anything, are largely increased. In all the translations we have seen into Teutonic languages—the English, Dutch, German, German-Swiss, Swedish and Danish—the peculiar metrical forms of Burns are strictly preserved, and it would be as easy and as pleasant to sing any one of his songs in German or Swedish as in the original, making due allowance, of course, for the translation. The translations into the Latin language, on the other hand—at least all those we have seen in Italian and French are in prose. This is the more to be wondered at when we remember that the first qualification of French poetry is that the terminal words should rhyme with the last words in one or more of the lines. But we cannot afford space here to enter very elaborately into the artistical and æsthetical laws of translation as applicable to Burns. We must content ourselves with a specimen in illustration of our statement. The following representative quotations are from Dr. Legerlotz and M. Angellier, both of whose works were published a short time ago. We will take the first verse and chorus of Rantin' Robin :—

*The Latin System—Prose.*

Il y eut un garçon qui naquit en Kye,  
Mais en quel jour et de quelle façon,  
Je ne demande si cela vaut la peine,  
D'être si minuté pour Robin.

Robin fut un vagabond,  
Un joyeux gars, un vagabond, un joyeux gars, un  
vagabond ;

Robin fut un vagabond,  
Un joyeux gars, un vagabond, Robin !

*The Teutonic System—Poetry.*

In Kyle do Kamm e Bub ans Licht,  
Doch welches Tags der Weltge-clicht,  
I mein, es lohnt des Muh halt nicht,  
To gnau ze sein mit Robin.

Robin war e loser Ruch,  
Los und locker, los und locker ;  
Robin war e loser Ruch,  
E locker Teufelshocker.

In the French version, the eye is no less offended than the ear and the taste. Compare the Gallie jerky irregularity with the staidness, harmony and finish of the German version, and mark how minutely the latter corresponds to the original—

There was a lad was born in Kyle,  
But whatna day o' whatna style,  
I doubt it's hardly worth the while,  
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

Robin was a rovin' boy,  
Rantin', rovin', rantin', rovin',  
Robin was a rovin' boy,  
Rantin', rovin' Robin !

About the year 1840 (the precise date is not given) Carlyle wrote to a friend in Germany, acknowledging receipt of a copy of the first edition of Heintz's version (not noted in the bibliographies), in the course of which he offers some sound advice on the subject of translating Burns, which, we fancy, must be widely known in the Vaterland, as German translators, without exception, have ever since striven to follow the simple rules he therein laid down for their guidance. The works before us would, we think, have secured the approbation of our sage. Dr. Legerlotz is well known in academic circles in Germany as a scholar of some distinction, and a lover of Burns from his sixteenth to his present year—a period of over forty years. A good record surely ! Indeed Burns's were almost the first poems the doctor read when a young man with any great relish ; and his life-long admiration of the Scottish Bard has ultimately and appropriately found expression in the works mentioned in our footnote, regarding which we proceed to make a few remarks.

Dr. Legerlotz's first contribution to the study of Burns was given in the pages of an academical journal published in Saltzwedel, in 1882 and 1884. In 1889 he published his little volume of selections from Burns's poetry, which is now, as we see, in the second edition. The work has been enthusiastically reviewed by the German press, and the author has received numerous testimonials from distinguished *litterateurs* who are unanimous in extolling its merits.

His book opens with an introduction, in which he briefly reviews the labours of his predecessors. We find mentioned quite a host of writers whose works are not recorded in any bibliography, catalogue, or list we have seen. Following this is a brief account of the life of Burns. Then we have a hundred and sixty pages filled with translations of the

best of Burns's poems. We regret to see that "Hans Gesterkorn" ("John Barley-corn"), so highly praised by Goethe, is not included in the doctor's collection. Surely this is an overlook.

In addition to the undernoted works, Dr. Legerlotz has published sixty-one translations from Burns in his book, "Aus Guten Stunden" ("From Good Hours"), which, besides this goodly representation of Scots poetry, contains translations from Gray, Dibdin, Wordsworth, Southey, Cunningham, Moore, Byron, Wolf, Shelley, Hemans, Motherwell (another Scotsman), Tennyson, Morris, Longfellow, and others. Dr. Legerlotz is a versatile translator. We have before us a work containing translations by him from ten different languages. Such things only exist in German.

#### XXIV.—HUGH MACDONALD ON BURNS.

THE following vigorous article on Burns is from the pen of Hugh Macdonald, the talented author of "Rambles Round Glasgow," "Days at the Coast," etc., a well known and highly respected literary man of fifty years ago. It is reprinted from

"The Rev. George Gilfillan *versus* Robert Burns,"

a pamphlet of twenty-seven pages, reprinted from the *Glasgow Citizen*, 1848. Only a few copies were printed for the friends of Mr. Macdonald, and the copy from which our notes are taken is the only one known to exist. Besides the two letters of Macdonald, of which we reproduce the most important, the pamphlet contained a letter by George Gilfillan, and another signed a "A Free Churchman." This now forgotten controversy originated in George Gilfillan's attacks on Burns in *Hogg's Weekly Instructor*, 1874.

"The cleanest corn that e'er was dight,  
May hae some piles o' caffin,  
Sae ne'er a fellow mortal slight,  
For *random* fits o' daffin."

Fifty times has the grass grown green in the sunshine and shower of spring, and fifty times has the sere leaf fallen in the gloom of com-

ing winter, o'er the cold clay that covers Scotia's best, and best beloved poet—Robert Burns! Other and great poets have arisen in our mountain lands since he dropt the lyre in the "valley of the shadow of death." Scott, Campbell, Wilson, and Nicoll—glorious luminaries in the firmament of song; but there is none who has touched the "far ben" strings of the genuine Scottish heart, like the ploughman of Coila—the heart-broken gauger of Dumfries. Burns had his failings, as, in a greater or lesser degree, every one has who calls the clod his brother; yet, in spite of, nay in consequence of, these very failings, is the memory and writings of the peasant bard cherished by the great mass of his countrymen. Had Burns lived by the compass and square of strict morality—had he never taken a "leeward bicker" from the narrow path of strict rectitude—he might have been the model hero of a religious novel, but he would not have been the high-priest of loving, erring, yet repentant hearts, as he is; he would not have been the bard of warmest, deepest passion—thrilling with the wand of fellow-feeling the heights and the depths of our glorious, though imperfect, nature. His failings were the fruit of an overly warm, rich heart; they are the

failings of a noble nature, excess in love, excess in friendly sociality. Mean vice was a stranger to him. He was right in his self-estimation when he wrote—

“The poor inhabitant below,  
Was quick to learn and wise to know,  
And warmly felt the friendly glow  
And softer flame,  
But thoughtless follies laid him low,  
And stain'd his name.”

The faults and failings of men are generally forgotten, or but faintly remembered, when death has laid them

“Where the wicked cease from troubling,  
And the weary are at rest.”

Charity aids the sexton, and covers all that is of the “earth earthy;” leaving only the bright and beautiful for memory to cherish. How different has been the fate of poor Burns; the faults he *had* are magnified and darkened, while the aid of underhand gossip is invoked, for the purpose of fabricating imaginary ones. Time and death, so lenient to the shortcomings of others, are not permitted in his case to throw the green ivy of forgetfulness over the shattered wall; still some living ass ariseth to kick the dead lion, and defile him with the slime of malignant calumny; too envious of his growing fame to let him sleep “alone in his glory.”

After the noble, the overwhelming defence of our bard by our gifted countryman, glorious old “Christopher North,” we had thought that the carping crew would have been silent for the next quarter of a century. It seems we have been mistaken. The Rev. George Gilfillan, of Dundee, has taken up the old cuckoo tale, and pours it forth with greater bitterness than any who have preceded him. Exaggeration is the characteristic of all the published writings of this reverend gentleman—overdone praise of some, overdone censure of others. He does nothing by halves. He “gilds the refined gold” and paints the lily in the one hand, and he breathes an added dinness on the rusted iron, and an added blight on the withering flower on the other. His favourites are demigods, these whom he dislikes demons.

With double exaggeration has this vendor of “glittering froth” fallen upon the character of poor Burns. In an article which appeared

in the 143rd Number of *Hogg's Weekly Instructor*, he says—

“Burns, by all the accounts we heard on the spot, *did* sink very low in Dumfries, associated with vile persons, and made himself viler than they; and that raging animalism, which was too often predominant, came here to its height. Dr. Wightman of Kirkmahoe, told us that he had met him *once*, but at this time he was desperate and at bay, vomiting forth obscenity, blasphemy, fierce ribaldry, and invective.” And again—“Alas, the mouth which once chanted the Cottar's Saturday Night, on the Sabbath-day, to his entranced brother Gilbert, was now an open sepulchre, full of uncleanness and death. His eloquence, once so pure, even in its wildness and mirth, was now a hideous compost of filth and fire. Death never did a more merciful act, than when he closed the most living lips that ever spake in Scotland—the lips of Robert Burns.”

Such is the judgment of a Scotsman, on the greatest of his country's sons, and the most ill-requitted—a judgment evidently formed on the most trifling hearsay evidence (a Dr. Wightman, of Kirkmahoe, “*met him once*”), yet given forth with as much force as if the evidence had been of the most conclusive nature. Mr. Gilfillan must be aware that such stories have been again and again refuted, by parties who not only met Burns *once*, but who were in habitual, daily, and nightly intercourse with him. He must have heard of the Rev. Mr. Gray's evidence, who had frequent opportunities of observing the poet, both at his own fireside, and in the general intercourse of society, and who fearlessly declares the falsehood of the great mass of these tales of the “horrible and awful,” which were circulated by the malevolent, and swallowed by the credulous.

“Burns,” he says, “was courted by all classes of men, for the fascinating powers of his conversation, but over his social scene uncontrolled passion never presided; over the social bowl his wit flashed for hours together, penetrating whatever it struck like the fire from heaven, but even in the hours of thoughtless gayety and merriment, I never knew it tinted by indecency. It was playful or caustic by turns, following an allusion



through all its windings—astonishing by its rapidity, or amusing by its wild originality and grotesque, yet natural, combinations, but never, within my observation, disgusting by its grossness. In his morning hours I never saw him like one suffering from the effects of last night's intemperance. He appeared then clear and unclouded. He was the eloquent advocate of humanity, justice, and political freedom. From his paintings virtue appeared more lovely, and pity assumed a more celestial mien. While his keen eye was pregnant with fancy and feeling, and his voice attuned to the very passion he wished to communicate, it would hardly have been possible to conceive any being more interesting and delightful. . . . The men with whom he generally associated were not of the lowest order. He numbered among his intimate friends many of the most respectable inhabitants of Dumfries and the vicinity. Many of these were attached to him by ties that the hand of calumny, busy as it was, could never snap asunder. They admired the poet for his genius, and loved the man for the candour, generosity, and kindness of his nature. His early friends clung to him through good and bad report, with a zeal and fidelity that prove their disbelief of malicious stories circulated to his disadvantage. Among them were some of the most distinguished characters in this country, and not a few females eminent for delicacy, taste, and genius. He was endeared to them even by his misfortunes, and they still retain for his memory that affectionate veneration which virtue alone inspires."

Here, then, we have two distinct pictures of the one individual—the one differing from the other as noon does from midnight; the one painted by the Rev. George Gilfillan, from the hearsay evidence of gossiping calumny—the other by the Rev. James Gray, from actual personal observation and intercourse. Lockhart and Wilson were both intimate with Gray, and bear honourable testimony to his probity and general worth. He was a lover of genius, but he would have scorned to conceal its failings behind the screen of falsehood. His testimony is backed by that of Finlater, Burns's supervisor in the

Excise, who was in almost daily communication with him from the time he came to live in Dumfries, until his death. Finlater says—"I have seen Burns in all his various phases, in his convivial moments, in his sober moods, and in the bosom of his family; indeed, I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, after he became an officer of the Excise, and I never beheld anything like the gross enormities with which he is now charged. That, when set down in an evening with a few friends whom he liked, he was apt to prolong the social hour beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate, is unquestionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than attentive and affectionate in a high degree." Such, then, is the testimony of those who were best acquainted with our poet; those who met and associated with him in the routine of his ordinary every-day life. How much more weight ought such evidence to have in our estimate of his character, than the scandalous and malignant tittle-tattle of parties who may have met him *once* perhaps for a few moments, under the most unfavourable circumstances, and who have formed a general estimate of his character from some particular unfavourable incident which they may have observed. Gilfillan would have us to believe that Burns sank into the lowest regions of brutality during the time he lived in Dumfries, vomiting forth obscenity, blasphemy, ribaldry, and fierce invective—that his mouth was filled with a hideous compost of filth and fire. Shame upon such vile calumnies! During the four years he was "dwining" in Dumfries, Robert Burns wrote no less than sixty of the *purest, best*, and most *beautiful* lyrics that the world has ever seen; besides innumerable letters, breathing the purest spirit of love, friendship, and truth; ay, and despite the charge of blasphemy, many of them heart-utterances of the most elevated piety—not the piety of creed and sect, but the sweet religious spirit of love, the religion which is a mingling of Nature's teachings with those of Him whose words were light from Heaven, and who was a stranger to guile. During the time he is said to have sunk so low in the slough of degradation, Burns wrote "*Auld Lang Syne*,"

"Scots Wha Hae," "Highland Mary," and that song of songs, that makes the honest poor man's bonnet rise upon his brow, and fills him with a deep and high sense of the innate dignity of worth, and hollowness of rank's gay trappings, the matchless strain, "A man's a man for a' that." Can a polluted fountain give forth clean water? Can a mouth filled with "uncleanness and death" pour forth living and pure words? Can a heart steeped in pollution, a heart "desperate and at bay," a heart vomiting obscenity, blasphemy, and fierce invective, send forth strains of unmingled, unstained passion?—songs that bring the tear of sweet remembrance into the dim eye of hoary eild—that lend a brightness to the warmest, purest love of young hearts—that rouse the crushed soul of poverty from despondency to gladness—and that would create a soul of freedom under the iron and the lash of grinding slavery! Mr. Gilfillan answers these questions in the affirmative. He says that Robert Burns, while writing almost daily effusions of unapproachable beauty and tenderness, was

himself a lost man, sunk in wickedness, and polluted with the lowest vices. "Most lame and impotent conclusion." Robert Burns, despite his occasional errors, had a noble, a loving, and a manly heart to the close. Death never did a more *merciless* act than when he slowly undermined, and finally struck down, in the high noon of life, the sweetest and most powerful singer that was ever heard among the grey hills of Caledonia. A hapless widow and four helpless children bewailed the sad act that bereft them of their protector. Every Scottish heart mourned the loss of him, the magic of whose song had thrilled its every string. Posterity will regret the untimely end of a genius that had not half unfolded its treasure. George Gilfillan, we firmly believe, is the only man in broad Scotland who would call it an act of mercy to shoot the bird in the midst of its song, and while its unfledged brood are in the nest—to lay low the poet in the midst of "thick-coming fancies," leaving a weeping mate and a helpless offspring depending on the charity of a cold world.

## XXV.—THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF BURNS.

*Editorial in SCOTSMAN, Jan. 26th, 1894.*

"A BLAST o' Januar' wind," snell and strong, with rain and sleet-showers on its wings, blew handsel in on the hundred and thirty-fifth anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. Yet it is not recorded that the raging weather thinned the ranks of those who gathered last night to do honour to the poet, or chilled their enthusiasm. Scotland, whatever slights she may have put upon him in his lifetime, is leal to the memory of her Bard. Repentance and atonement may be late, but they are at least heartfelt and abiding. Burns-worship, whatever the superfine critics may say, is no dwindling cult. Year by year, as time makes the gulf wider between the ploughman poet's day and our own, his fame broadens, his genius gains a hold over a wider audience. This is surely a rare and notable thing in the history of song. Nearly a hundred years have passed

since the living voice of the poet was hushed. Never has there been a century so full of change. Nowhere have those changes been more pregnant than in Burns's own land. The very tongue in which he spoke has begun to fall into disuse; and a generation is rising up to whom much that Burns wrote is as a sealed book. The Scottish language, or dialect—call it what you will—is being driven from position after position, along with the old and distinctive national customs and beliefs. The process is inevitable, and may possibly be beneficent. It is the result of laws of social gravitation that are of universal operation—the natural product of the development of intercourse and spread of school education which have been among the marvels and boasts of the century. But whatever else the effect might be, one might have supposed that it would be

fatal to the influence and fame of a poet whose note only attains the full measure of its native clearness, strength, and sweetness, when he sings in his native tongue. Mr. Crockett, in the happy speech in which he proposed the "Immortal Memory" to the Edinburgh Burns Club, suggested the institution of competitive examinations in the etymology of the poet's lines, and offered to "plough" the University Professors in selected passages. It is probable that he could make good his threat. Words and phrases that were luminous with meaning a century ago have become archaic curiosities; they drop out of the common speech, and are treasured only by the antiquary.

The form changes; the spirit survives and gathers strength. The memory of Burns is more cherished, the fire and light that dwelt in him are more pervading and powerful, than ever before. Among the forces that are moulding the lives and character of his countrymen there is probably none, arising out of the words and thoughts of a single man, so great at this hour as that associated with the name of Robert Burns. This can only be because he struck a deep and true note in the heart of his country and of humanity. For all time he made himself the proclaimer of the inherent nobility and dignity of Man, and the exponent of Freedom and Brotherhood. It is because his lay is so simple and direct, so level with the hearts of peasant and of peer, that it promises to be immortal. At a time when the poetry of the day appears to be at a discount, when there is an interregnum in the Laureateship, and when the competitors for the singing crown seek to give proof of their inspiration by strange contortion and extravagant and far-fetched phrase, it is refreshing to turn and drink of this pure wellhead of poetry. Nature's draught is bound to be the best. There is substance, then, in Mr. Crockett's pleasant conceit that Robert Burns may be a personification of the solar myth. His genius had the life-giving warmth and the bounteous generosity of the sun. It shone in at the humblest cottage door. It reminded a nation which, under

the teaching that the highest good of humanity was to be sought by the contemplation of sin and depravity, may have become somewhat soured and cross-grained in spirit, of its right to a frank and full share in the general heritage of happiness. It taught men to hold up their heads and bless, instead of curse, the day in which they were born.

Scotland now seeks to make recompense by blessing with all her heart and strength the natal day of her poet, and the response to her praises comes from the ends of the earth. We have to thank him in no light measure if the air about us is more free and bright and the wine of life sweeter to the taste than it was when he began to toil and sing. What better sign of this need be sought than the fact that his chief and most eloquent eulogists last night were ministers of the Kirk! This great gift of love and gladness he has bestowed on us out of a life that was full of care and sorrow and disappointment. Surely as we look at the soil out of which his genius sprang, and the conditions under which it throve and yielded flower and fruit, our thankfulness and our wonder should keep growing from anniversary to anniversary. It seems well-nigh impossible to have a Burns banquet at which the failings and follies of the Bard are not served up to the guests. One would fain see a commemoration at which this death's-head did not form part of the feast. The *per contra* is so small compared with the vast sum of his claims on our gratitude and admiration, that for once we might consent to forget it. Yet perhaps the custom of keeping the sins of Robert Burns, as well as his wondrous legacy of love and song, in perpetual remembrance may be a salutary one. Touched in the right spirit—the spirit of charity and of Burns—it supplies the notes of discord that give greater depth and more poignant meaning to the music. It is the dark and tragic element that encompasses the sunlit and enchanted isle of poetry, to which the minds and hearts of men more gladly resort as the strain and the hurry of life increase. It is the reminder that in all things, and above all things, Robert Burns was human.



XXVI.—PRINCIPAL TULLOCH ON THE STUDY OF BURNS.

At the opening of the "Duncan Institute," in Cupar-Fife, the late Very Rev. Principal Tulloch, of St. Andrews University, delivered an address, and among his other remarks he strongly advised each of his hearers to adopt a course of reading, and instanced as a fit subject of study the "Life and Poetry of Robert Burns":—"To understand Burns's poetry," he said, "in its full meaning and interest—in all its connection with his own life and experience, and with the social, intellectual, and religious habits of his time, as presented, for example, in Dr. Robert Chambers' well-known edition—would involve a pretty hard winter's study, and a study, too, if rightly pursued, well deserving of the time bestowed upon it. The student would find in the end not only that he had enriched his mind by some of the most living poetry, lyrical, descriptive, and satirical, that ever came fresh from a human heart aglow with the fire of genius, but that he had opened to himself many new lights into the history of the time, and the whole state of the Scottish mind and feeling, and the social and religious civilization in the end of last century. There are few things in all the world more interest-

ing and pathetic than Burns's life, so noble and grand in its impulses, lighted up with such brilliancy of passion and feeling, lavishing itself on such tender and exquisite sensibilities, and in form of poetic power and beauty unapproachable, which the world will never willingly let die; and yet, so tragic in its sordid cares and miseries, and in its lapses from what is good and right—lapses which none felt more bitterly than himself in his better moments. Such a vision of the Divine he had, and yet into what depths of the un-Divine did he fall, as he makes his native muse deplore:—

'I saw thy pulse's maddening play  
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way :  
Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,  
By passion driven,  
But yet the light that led astray  
Was light from heaven.'

The study of such a genius, in all the fullness of its development and surroundings, in all its significance—personal, intellectual, historical—is a study of wide and ennobling extent, and would be found to make something of a real education for any one undertaking it thoroughly, and to be full of many real lessons, moral as well as intellectual."

XXVII.—BURNS'S SONG, "WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOUN?"

BY W. A. CLOUSTON.

It is well known that this fine song was originally written as a tribute of the poet's admiration for the beautiful Lucy Johnston, wife of Richard A. Oswald, of Auchencruive, at the time residing in Dumfries, and that when Burns sent it for insertion in *Johnson's Museum* he had altered the name of "Lucy" to "Jean" and "Jeanie"—probably meant for Jean Lorimer, the poet's "Chloris" and "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks."

In May, 1795, Burns enclosed the song in a letter to John Syme, asking him whether he thought he might venture to present it to Mrs. Oswald. This also is well known to readers of Burns's Correspondence; but no mention, so far as I have been able to ascer-

tain, has been made by any editor of his works of the interesting fact that the song was first printed in the *Glasgow Magazine* for September, 1795—a copy of the first volume of which has been recently acquired for the Glasgow Mitchell Library; strange to say, it is not in the British Museum or the Advocates' Library—with "Jean" and "Jeanie" substituted for "Lucy," and a few other necessary modifications. The song will be found on page 155 of that scarce Glasgow periodical under the heading of "Song, by Robert Burns (never before published)."

In the copy written for Mrs. Oswald the third line of the chorus reads—



The fairest dame's in yon toun ;  
in the version printed in *Glasgow Magazine*—

The fairest mail's in yon toun.

Line 2 of the third verse (not reckoning the chorus, with which the song begins)—

And on yon bonnie banks of Ayr ;

line 4—

And dearest bliss is Lucy fair ;

these read thus in *Glasgow Magazine*—

Amang the broomy braes sae green ;

And dearest treasure is my Jean.

Next verse, third line, for "Lucy," "Jeanie;"  
next verse, fourth line, for "tend," "tent;"

last verse but one, fourth line, for "Lucy,"  
"Jeanie ;" and first line of last verse—

For while life's dearest blood is warm,

reads in *Glasgow Magazine*—

For while life's dearest blood runs warm.

Mr. Scott Douglas, in his edition of the works of Burns, appends a long note to this charming song, in which he remarks that "it was no unusual thing with Burns to shift the devotion of a verse from one person to another," but, like preceding commentators on the poet's writings, he evidently believed that the song of "Wat ye wha's in yon toun" was first printed in *Johnson's Museum*.

## XXVIII.—THE CHARACTER OF ROBERT BURNS.

PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART remarks—  
"All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous ; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that kind of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities."

Burns's marvellous power lay in the immense size of the brain, sensitive temperament, acuteness of observation and discrimination, and in the energy of his passions. He saw beauty and found material for his genius in the humblest of natural objects. In turning a daisy down with his plough, he thus begins to address it :—

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,  
Thou'st met me in an evil hour ;  
For I maun crush amang the stoure  
Thy slender stem ;  
To spare thee now is past my power,  
My bonnie gem."

The most ardent admirers of Burns are obliged to admit that he for some time led an irregular life, and gave too much reason for unfavourable comment. But charity and equity suggest, that before any one sets himself up as a judge of the poet's character, he should know his constitution, be able to see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and feel as he felt, and experience like impressions

that each environing force produced on him. Let us, in bringing him to the bar of public opinion, consider the strength of his temptations, and how often he successfully gave them battle ; and place these, with his splendid qualities, as a set-off against his failings.

The spirit of independence he showed, and the freedom with which he gave his advanced opinions, on politics and religious dogmata raised another company of hostile opponents to defame his reputation. He was denounced as a heretic, and as being irreligious. Well, he certainly was not a believer in some of the prevailing orthodox dogmas. In this respect, and as a politician he was a century and a half ahead of his time. Religious and political liberty since then, has grown wonderfully ; hence it is, that his countrymen are only now beginning to really appreciate his talents, power, and worth.

Can any true Christian read "The Cotter's Saturday Night," from which we would like to quote a stanza or two, and say the author was unmindful of religion ? If so, he is differently constituted from us.

He was very sympathetic and inclined to pensiveness and melancholy. His large cautiousness and moderate hope would contribute to this, but its chief source was his large development of the sentiment of grave-ness, and it was this from which his pensiveness and pathos sprung. Its vigour greatly impressed him through life. Though grave-

ness afflicted him sorely, it prompted, or at least mellowed some of his best lyric composition. It was chiefly through the influence of this feeling and sublimity that he composed the poem—Winter : a Dirge.

Burns was honest and courageous in the expression of his opinions. His mind was made of a kind of detonating compound, so that when struck it instantly exploded. He spoke out boldly what he thought, and reflected his feeling with mirror-like distinctness and fidelity. To oppression and hypocrisy he was an inexorable censor, an unconquerable, ever-watchful, resolute antagonist. He used his matchless weapons—lampoons,

scathing wit, and burning satire, with such dexterity and crushing force as to pierce the very marrow. Hypocrites, of which there were a large number, he spared not. He handled them in so deservedly ruthless a manner as to make them enemies for all time coming. He tore the mask off their faces, and delineated so many of their repulsive features so graphically in imperishable lyrics, as to make them feel that the glowing eyes of the Scottish bard were constantly on them, and to impress the two-faced, even of the present day, with the idea that “A chiel’s amang them takin’ notes, an’ faith he’ll prent them.”

## XXIX.—BURNSIANA NOTES.

*Compiled by JOHN MUIR, F.S.A. Scot.*

### BURNS AT ECCLEFECHAN.

THE duties of Supervisor, which Burns had taken up during the last years of his life, brought him on more than one occasion to the little village of Ecclefechan, in Annandale. He made one noteworthy visit there, regarding which he has left us the following record, a strange mixture of humour, exaggeration, and unconscious ungratefulness:—

“Ecclefechan, 7th February, 1795.

My Dear Thomson,—You cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write you. In the course of my duty as Supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late) I came yester-night to this unfortunate, wicked little village. I have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress ; I have tried to “gac back the gate I cam’ again,” but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a butcher ; and thinks himself, *on that very account*, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries ; or to hang myself to get rid of them ; like a prudent man (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed), I, of two

evils, have chosen the least, and am very drunk at your service !

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time *then* to tell you all I wanted to say ; and, heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good-night.

R. B.

P.S.—As I am likely to be storm-stead here to-morrow, if I am in the humour, you shall have a long letter from me. R. B.

The reader, knowing the poet’s unreserve, will not accept the above as a circumstantial account of the conditions under which the letter was written. Could any man, in the situation described by Burns, have written such a letter ? We opine not. All the same ; it is to be regretted that our poet so far forgot himself as to call Ecclefechan “an unfortunate, wicked little village,” little dreaming of the destinies of Ecclefechan infants, one of whom, named Thomas Carlyle, born on the 4th December of the year of Burns’s unlucky visit, was afterwards to be known to the world as the most sympathetic interpreter of his life and works.

Ecclefechan, even in Burns’s time, was by no means so contemptible as the poet would have us suppose. No less than four individuals, whose names and deeds have been rescued from oblivion, and who accompanied

Burns part of the way in his all too brief earthly pilgrimage, were born in Ecclefechan, viz., Janet Little, the Scotch milkmaid, who corresponded with, and addressed several poems to Burns; and William Nicol ("Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut"). But it is chiefly as the birthplace of Dr. James Currie, of Liverpool, the amiable editor of Burns's Works, and the most effective friend of the poet's family, that Ecclefechan interests admirers of Burns. Its crowning glory is, however, that it was there Thomas Carlyle was born, and lies buried beside the dust of his kindred in the quiet little churchyard.

Nor was Ecclefechan without its influence of Burns's muse. A real or imaginary damsel, named "Lucky Laing," of that ilk, was the heroine of a little anonymous song, first printed in Johnson's "Musical Museum," but now considered by the majority of competent critics to be from the pen of Burns. After our poet's description of the village, the reader will perhaps be prepared not to expect too much in the matter of minstrelsy; for what "wicked little village" could be otherwise than disappointing in respect of its bonnie lassies? Here is the song:—

"Gat ye me, O, gat ye me,  
O, gat ye me wi' naething?  
Rock and reel and spinning wheel,  
A meikle quarter basin.  
Bye attour, my gutcher has  
A high house and a laigh ane,  
A' forbye my bonnie sel',  
The lass of Ecclefechan.  
O, haud your tongue now, Luckie Laing,  
O, haud your tongue and jauner;  
I held the gate till you I met,  
Syne I began to wander:  
I tint my whistle and my sang,  
I tint my peace and pleasure;  
But your green graff now, Luckie Laing,  
Wad airt me to my treasure."

#### A BURNS RELIC.

An important relic—"the property of an officer"—was knocked down recently at Sotheby's for £50. It was described in the catalogue of the sale as "a most interesting and probably unique copy of the second or first Edinburgh edition of the poems of Burns, the blank names having been filled in by the author when on a visit to John Lee at Skateraw on May 21, 1787."

#### UNPUBLISHED VERSE.

In the MS. of Burns's lines on the Death of John Macleod the following stanza was omitted by the author:—

Were it in the poet's power,  
Strong as he shares the grief  
That pierces Isabella's heart,  
To give that heart relief.

#### DR. CURRIE'S BURNS.

A correspondent in the newspapers writes:—  
I have at present in my hands a volume of selections from Dr. Currie's Letters, edited by his son (Longman, 1831). On the waste leaf at front is written:—

"The letter from Dr. Currie to me, prefixed to this volume (since transferred to a collection of Dr. Currie's Letters), gives a laughable account of his interviews with a very excellent man, the late Earl of Galloway, and a parallel, by no means favourable to his Lordship, though borrowed from Shakespeare.

"In speaking of Burns, the Doctor is mistaken when he says *I had not seen him*. On the contrary, I was well acquainted with him, and greatly admired both his poetry and prose; but of his general conduct and character I thought the less that was said the better."

Query: who was the writer of this, who says he was "well acquainted with Burns?" Inside the front board is pasted the library label of "Alexander Young," bearing underneath coat of arms the motto—*Robori Prudentia Præstat*. It seems anyone having Dr. Currie's Letters (complete edition—not the Selections) could easily put the saddle on the right horse.

#### CITIZEN BURNS.

There is said to be in existence a Burgess Ticket, with name of Robert Burns thereon, said ticket purporting to bestow the freedom of the Burgh of Linlithgow on the same. Doubts have arisen as to its being genuine, could it be possible to get possession of the same, and ascertain how it is said ticket is said to be in the possession of a Mr. Mitchell, Glasgow, and is, I believe, some relation to the donors of the Mitchell Library, Glasgow. The Mitchells at that date (1787) were Tobacco Manufacturers in Linlithgow.



## TWO UNPUBLISHED POEMS.

The *Dumfries Standard* says :—We were shewn last night a MS. volume of the Glenriddel Collection which was recently picked up at a sale of books by a private collector. It is a perfect treasure house of documents relating to this locality ; but its chief interest lies in three holograph poems by Burns—his lines on hearing a mavis sing : a rollicking “bucolic” on a Nithsdale dame ; and a scathing satire on the then Duke of Queensberry. Neither the “bucolic” nor the satire has ever been published ; some might think the former unfit for print : for the humour carries an odour of the byre too pungent to be called “the sweet breath of kine.” It is all very clever, however, and there is no manner to doubt that it is the work of the poet, given to Riddel and bound up by him with other precious papers. Its value is enhanced by a laughable cartoon of the scene described—a byre-interior, very brightly treated ; and this, we suspect, is a work of Riddel’s, and the poet’s friend Grose.

## SOME MISSING MSS.

A correspondent writes in the *Glasgow Herald* :—At this time, when the anniversary fervour for “the immortal memory of Burns” has once again excited the Scottish mind, may I be allowed to take advantage of this “tide in the affairs of men” to mention a few things which might yet be discovered and recovered, which would add to our interest in and our knowledge of the national bard. (1.) Dr. Currie states, in a letter to John Syme, Esq., 28th April 1797, that “Burns corresponded with a Miss [Helen] Craik”—[daughter, I presume, of Wm. Craik, Esq. of Arbigland, in the parish of Kirkbean, Kirkcudbrightshire, notable in his day as a successful and intelligent agriculturist on the Scottish side of the Solway]—a poetess, and in one of her replies to him I see he had given her a critique, “Johnson’s Lives of the Poets.” I wish that letter could be recovered ; it would be very curious, even if it contained an opinion only. (“Life of Dr. Currie,” vol. i., p. 288.) Miss Craik, who had a good deal of “the eccentricity of genius,” died, I believe, at Allonby. Surely

in a family famed for its literary excellence the letters of Burns, who was a friend and visitor, ought not to have been among “property lost, stolen, or strayed.” May they not be stowed away somewhere yet? Might not her letters to Burns be worth recovery? They were evidently at one time (original or copied) in Currie’s possession. This suggests—(2.) At the request of [Sir] Walter Scott—who had asked the biographer to examine the MSS. of Burns in his hands, for some literary purpose—Dr. Currie, in a letter dated 28th November 1800, mentions that he sends “a short notice” of one division of Burns’s MSS., consisting of “poems in the Scottish dialect, addressed to Burns himself, in general indifferent enough ; and the rest of poems of various kinds, some of them of considerable merit” (*Ibid.* vol. ii., p. 348.) Are these MSS. still extant, or is even Currie’s notice of them still attainable? 3. Mrs. Dunlop’s letters to Burns are, it is said, carefully preserved among the family papers in the possession of her representatives. Might we not ask if the time has not now come when the seals of secrecy might be broken, and they might be given to the world or at least made available to those who are really interested in the life of the poet-friend, over whom she exercised so potent an influence for good? The letters which Burns appreciated so highly the world would surely consider with care and regard as worthy of incorporation in type. (4.) Currie says to Alexander Cunningham, Esq., 1st March 1797—“There is no occasion for publishing everything now that is to be published ; the great duty is to collect now before things are lost, and to publish at present only what is fit, leaving doubtful matter for other editors and aftertimes” (vol. I., page 285.) Are any of these “leavings” recoverable, and if so, where? They should have been cared for and preserved for future use. (5.) Dugald Stewart, writing hurriedly to Dr. Currie, 6th September 1800, says, in reference to the biography of Burns—“I have much yet to say on the subject,” and promises (conditionally) another letter. Is any such letter extant? Stewart had himself been suggested as Burns’s biographer. He lived twenty-eight years after the date of this letter, and must



most likely have fulfilled his promise to the Laird of Dumerieff, who had been one of his own students, and was a friend. The same question may be asked concerning "a valuable communication" from Mr. [John] Ramsay of Ochertyre, of which Currie acknowledges receipt when writing to Syme, 10th October 1800. Any communication from such a scholarly country gentleman as Ramsay could scarcely fail to afford interest and satisfaction.

The general questions regarding the foregoing materials are—"Are they yet to the fore," if so, where are they to be found, and ought they not now to be sought out and put into the perdurability of type? These are a few jottings of possibly recoverable *desiderata*, and there are yet more which may receive note hereafter.

#### BURNS AND THE IRVINE INCORPORATED TRADES.

A minute or report of the clerk and treasurer of the Ancient Incorporation of the Trades of Irvine, dated 2nd October, 1782, and which seems hitherto to have escaped notice, deserves attention by the admirers of the bard, to whom every incident of his life has a special interest. It is as undernoted—"To Robert Burns brothering (there are several other entries) £0 1s. 4d." Of date 14th March, 1783, there is also the following minute:—

"At a meeting of the present deacons and other members of the six incorporated trades of the Burgh of Irvine, presided over by Thomas Muir, deacon and convener, a petition to Parliament was drawn up, craving the restoration of the original and unquestionable right of the citizens and burgesses to choose their own Magistrates and Members of Council and their own representatives to Parliament."

Robert Burns seems to have been present at that meeting. At least, there is a signature "Robert Burns," the last on the list except that of the clerk. The record does not mention to which trade the Robert Burns noted was entered, and if this can be discovered from any of the separate minutes of the various trades, it would go far to confirm the

connection of the bard with the Irvine guild. This much can be said, that the time, 2nd October, 1782, exactly corresponds with that in which Burns was in Irvine. It is understood that the burning of his shop took place on 1st January, 1783. No doubt he, Robert Burns, being a stranger, would require to enter with one of the six incorporated trades before he could start as a flax-dresser. The name does not seem to be again mentioned after 1783. Burns left Irvine in 1783, and entered the farm of Mossgiel at Martinmas, 1783, so he could have been present at the meeting of 14th March. It would be satisfactory if any of the experts in regard to his signature would examine the signature in the Irvine minute. Facility for doing so will be gladly afforded by Mr. James Shields, the clerk. It is but right to mention that on the 2nd October, 1770, Robert Burns, son of David Burns, compeared and paid his dues for the loft, amounting to 1s. 6d. David was the deacon convener of the trades, and his son would no doubt be brothered at the time he entered—that is, in the year 1770—so the presumption is that he is not the Robert Burns mentioned in 1782. There is a difference of twelve years between the two dates.

#### LETTER OF BURNS.

The following letter, which I copied from a *fac-simile* in the Dumfries Observatory, has been wrongly transcribed by nearly every editor of Burns:—

DEAR SIR,—The following Ode is on a subject which I know you by no means regard with indifference—

"O Liberty!

Thou mak'st the gloomy face of Nature gay,  
Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day!"

It does me so much good to meet with a Man whose honest bosom glows with the generous enthusiasm, and heroic daring, of Liberty, that I could not forbear sending you a composition of my own on the subject, which I really think is in my best manner. I have the honour to be, dear sir, your very humble servant, ROBERT BURNS.

Captain Miller, Dalswinton.

## BURNS'S WATCH.

At the World's Fair, Chicago, some historic watches were exhibited. Among others, a curious timepiece in three metal cases, open face, with bright picture landscape, dated 1771, and marked Kil. Scot. This was R. B.'s watch.

## SCOTS WHA HAE.

The following interesting postscript had not been previously published, when the present writer communicated it to the *North British Daily Mail*, January 11, 1893. The poem, on being collated with the printed versions, will be found to contain some nice variations :—

## BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS TROOPS AT BANNOCKBURN.

Scots wha hae with Wallace bled,  
Scots whom Bruce has often led,  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to glorious victorie !

Now's the day, and now's the hour ;  
See the front of battle lour ;  
See approach proud Edward's power,  
Edward ! Chains and slaverie !

Wha will be a traitor knave,  
Wha can fill a coward's grave,  
Wha sae base as be a slave,  
Traitor ! Coward ! turn and flie.

Wha for Scotland's King and law  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
Freeman stand, or Freeman fa',  
Caledonian, on with me !

By Oppression's wrongs and pains !  
By your sons in servile chains !  
We will drain our dearest veins,  
But they shall—they shall be free !

Lay the proud Usurpers low ;  
Tyrants fall in every foe,  
Liberty's in every blow !  
Forward ! let us do or die !

## [POSTSCRIPT.]

This battle was the decisive blow which put Robert I., commonly called Robert de Bruce, in quiet possession of the Scottish Throne. It was fought against Edward II., son of that Edward who shed so much blood in Scotland in consequence of the dispute between Bruce and Balliol.

Apropos when Bruce fled from London to claim the Scottish crown, he met with the Cummin, another claimant of the crown, at Dumfries. At the altar in the priory there they met, and it is said that Bruce offered to Cummin—"Give me your land, and I'll give you my interest in the crown, or vice versa."

What passed nobody knows ; but Bruce came in a great flurry to the door, and called out to his followers—"I am afraid that I have slain the Cummin !" "Are you only afraid !" replied Sir Roger de Kilpatrick (ancestor to the present Sir James Kilpatrick of Closeburn), and ran into the church and stabbed Cummin to the heart, and coming back, said, shewing a bloody dagger, "I've sicker'd him !" that is, in English, I have secured him.

Until lately this was the motto of the Closeburn family ; but the late Sir Thomas changed it into "I make sure." The crest still is "The bloody dagger."

To Dr. Hughes from—Robt. Burns.

[*Docquets*.—"A beautiful poem given me by the author, Mr. Burns, the celebrated Scottish poet, when at Dumfries, Saty., Augt. 8, 1795.

"This poem has not yet been published in his collection.—J. H."

The last paragraph followed by the doctor's initials has been afterwards deleted by drawing the pen through the writing, presumably on learning that the poem had been published in Thomson's collection, for which it was written.

The next docquet is in a different hand, that of the lady whose signature is given :—

"Burns's own writing.—Given to my father-in-law, Dr. Hughes of Hereford, by Burns.—BARBARA HUGHES."]

## BURNS AND DR. SMITH OF GALSTON.

"And mony a ane that I could tell  
Wha fain would openly rebel,  
Forby turn-coats amang oursel'—

There's Smith for ane ;  
I doubt he's but a grey-neck guile,  
And that ye'll fin'."

*The Two Herds.*

"Irvine-side! Irvine-side!  
 Wi' your turkey-cock pride,  
 Of manhood but sma' is your share;  
 Ye've the figure, 'tis true,  
 Even your foes will allow,  
 And your friends they dare grant you nae  
 mair—  
 Irvine-side! your friends they dare grant you  
 nae mair."

*The Kirk's Alarm.*

"Smith opens out his cold harangues  
 On practice and on morals;  
 An' aff the godly pour in thrangs  
 To gi'e the jars and barrels  
 A lift that day.

"What signifies his barren shine  
 Of moral pow'rs an' reason?  
 His English style and gesture fine  
 Are a' clean out o' reason.  
 Like Socrates or Antonine,  
 Or some auld pagan heathen,  
 The moral man he does define,  
 But ne'er a word o' faith in  
 That's right that day."

*The Holy Fair.*

"DADDY AULD" HIMSELF REBUKED.

The following excerpt from the minutes of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland of 9th May, 1745, may interest the reader:—"A petition of Mr. William Auld, minister at Mauchline, taking an appeal from a sentence of the Presbytery of Ayr, finding him guilty of great imprudence in throwing out a story affecting the character of a brother, and ordering that he be admonished to be more cautious for the future; with another petition of Mr. Patrick Wodrow, minister at Tarbolton, a member of the said Presbytery, praying leave to lay the case above-mentioned fully before this Assembly, that they may give judgment thereanent read, and the said affair dismissed; and the Assembly recommended to the brethren of the said Presbytery to bury their differences in oblivion, and to live henceforth in brotherly love and friendship."

# BURNS ACROSTIC.

*From "Historical Review and Poems," by  
 John Macintosh.*

R obbed of her inspiration rod,  
 O ld Poesy stood awhile  
 B efore a genius' bright abode,  
 E lse home of mental toil.  
 "R est ever with me, here, thou gentle muse,"  
 T he poet said, and Poesy answered thus:

"B right soul, beholden to my spell,  
 U nsullied be thy fame;  
 R eign here, oh, Inspiration still,  
 N or ever bid the heart farewell,  
 S uch honour that can claim."

## A REBUKE FROM BURNS.

Burns called once on a certain lord in Edinburgh, and was shown into the library. To amuse himself till his lordship was at leisure the poet took down a volume of Shakespeare, splendidly bound, but, on opening it, he discovered from the gilding that it had never been read, and also that the worms were eating it through and through. He, therefore, took out his pencil and wrote the following lines in it. They, however, were only discovered about twelve years afterwards:—

"Through and through the inspired leaves,  
 Ye maggots, make your windings;  
 But, oh! respect his lordship's taste,  
 And spare his golden bindings."

## AN OLD HAUNT OF BURNS.

Some time ago, when Mr. Thomas Spencer, hairdresser, High Street, Irvine, came down stairs to open his place of business, he found the side door burst in, the wooden beam or step against which the door shuts, hanging loose, and the apartment in disorder. Making his way through to the front door, he found the glass panel smashed, and the glass strewn about inside the shop. It looked at first as if the place had been attacked by some maliciously disposed party of midnight marauders, but subsequent inquiry dissipated that idea. The shop was an old haunt of the poet Burns. A century ago it was occupied by a bookseller named Templeton. Burns



was almost a daily visitor. A bunch of ballads (then printed on long, narrow stripes of paper, about the length of a newspaper column) which hung within reach of his long arm had a strong attraction for the bard, and it was his custom to sit on the counter and rhyme over any of the ballads that happened to take his fancy. He was, it is said, always on the look-out for anything new in that line. The house is an old one, in the Scottish style, with gable end facing the street, and must give way before long to one of a more modern type.

#### ANECDOTES OF BURNS.

Robert Burns, it is well-known, was addicted to the bottle. A physician, who attended him in his last illness, remonstrating with him on this head, assured him that "the *coat* of his stomach was entirely gone." The merry bard declared that if that were the case he would go on drinking to the end of the chapter, "for if the *coat* was all gone, it was not worth while carrying about the *waistcoat*."

The late Mr. Stillie used to tell a good story of how he called upon Wilson, of Kilmarnock—Burns's publisher—in order to buy chap books. The publisher had an intelligent assistant, who was an admirer of Burns, and told how the poet called upon Wilson about a second edition, and received the reply, "Rab, Rab, it will nae dae, unless ye put some guid yins at the beginning."

One Sunday morning some time before Burns commenced as an author, when he and his brother Gilbert were going to the parish church of Tarbolton, they got into company with an old man, a Moravian, travelling to Ayr. It was at that time when the dispute between the Old and New Light Burghers was making a great noise in the country; and Burns and the old man, entering into conversation on the subject, differed in their opinions about it, the old man defending the principles of the Old Light, and Burns those of the New Light. The disputants at length grew very warm in the debate, and Burns, finding that with all his eloquence he could make nothing of his antagonist, became a little acrimonious, and

tauntingly exclaimed, "Oh! I suppose I have met with the Apostle Paul this morning." "No," replied the old Moravian, coolly, "you have not met the Apostle Paul; but I think I have met one of those wild beasts which he says he fought with when at Ephesus."

Burns's early patroness, Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, had an old housekeeper, a privileged person, who had aristocratical notions of the family dignity that made her astonished at the attentions that were paid by her mistress to a man of such low, worldly estate as the rustic poet. In order to overcome her prejudice her mistress persuaded her to peruse "The Cottar's Saturday Night." When Mrs. Dunlop inquired her opinion of the poem she replied, indifferently:—"Aweel, madam, it's vera weel." "Is that all you have to say in its favour?" asked the lady. "'Deed, madam," replied the housekeeper, "the like o' you quality may see a vast in't; but I was aye used to the like o' all that he has written about in my ain father's house, and aweel I dinna ken how he could hae described it any other gait." Burns declared the old woman's criticism one of the finest compliments he had ever received.

#### WILMOTT'S EDITIONS OF BURNS.

The following letters by Mr. Muir, Mr. W. C. Angus, and Dr. Patterson (?), are extracted from the *Glasgow Herald*:—

The Rev. Robert Aris Willmott is a name well known to collectors as the editor of various editions of Burns's poems. Three of his editions are recorded on the catalogue, and preserved in the collection, bearing the name of the late Mr. James M'Kie, Kilmarnock—one under 1865 and two under 1866. In Mr. Gibson's Bibliography there is a Willmott edition under 1858, and also the two under 1866 as in the M'Kie Library; but Mr. M'Kie does not record the 1858 edition, nor Mr. Gibson the one dated 1865. The 1858 and 1866 editions are in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow. The British Museum has two of the foregoing editions—1865 and one of the 1866 issues—and, in addition, and by the same editor, one under 1856 (presumably



the first of the series), and another without date, but noted within brackets as 1880. These last two are not to be found in the M'Kie or Mitchell Library collections; and, except by Mr. John P. Anderson, are not recorded in any of the Bibliographies. Quite recently I bought from a London bookseller a copy of the 1856 edition. As it is probably the initial volume of the series—at least it is the first known to collectors—perhaps it may interest your readers if I transcribe the imprint:—"The Poetical Works of Robert Burns. Edited by the Rev. Robert Aris Willmott, Incumbent of Bear Wood. Illustrated by John Gilbert [Foolscap octavo]. London: George Routledge & Co., 1856." To make a complete set of the Willmott editions the resources of three public libraries have to be taxed. M.

Your correspondent commits an error if he supposes that the six editions which he enumerates as having been published between 1856 and 1880 are the whole of the Aris Willmott-Routledge editions of the poetical works of Burns. I have now before me (and I have seen others) two editions which your correspondent does not mention—one, 1869, with portrait and illustrations by Sir John Gilbert; the other, 1859, without illustrations. A.

The interesting communication regarding the above contains one or two inaccuracies. It is stated that in the M'Kie collection there is one edition 1865 and two of 1866; there are three editions under 1866. The writer is quite correct in assuming 1856 to be the first of the Willmott's; the preface indicates the fact, and is dated "St. Catherine's, Bear Wood, May 7, 1856." The writer says, "To make a complete set of the Willmott editions the resources of three public libraries have to be taxed." The resources of the three public libraries do not complete the set, as the writer of this note has in his possession a Willmott edition dated 1859, and one of 1867, neither of which appears to be in any of the three public libraries. The collection, whether public or private, which contains all the editions of Burns's works may be held to be unique. Such an one is not yet in existence. P.

## TRANSLATIONS OF BURNS.

The languages into which the poems of Burns have been translated, in full or in part, if arranged on philological principles, give us this not uninteresting result. The classification is by the present writer.

I. *Teutonic*—(1) English, (2) German, (3) German-Swiss, (4) Danish, (5) Dutch, (6) Swedish—6.

II. *Italic*—(1) French, (2) Italian, (3) Classical Latin, (4) Mediæval Latin—4.

III. *Celtic*—(1) Gaelic—1.

IV. *Slavonic*—(1) Cech—1.

V. *Hellenic*—(1) Romaic, (2) Classical Greek—2. Total, 14.

## AUTOGRAPHS OF BURNS.

The following autograph letters and poems of Burns, some of which are unpublished, have been sold during recent years:—

BURNS (R.) Portion of a Letter with his signature, Robt. Burns, sent to Thomson, and presented by him to Allan Cunningham, with Dumfries Letter mark, and autographs of Thomson and A. Cunningham.

BURNS (ROBERT) Holograph Letter (4 pages) to Peter Millar, jun., ending with two Epigrams, and having as a Postscript "a new Scots Song, tune The Sutor's Tochter: 'Wilt thou be my Dearie,'" thanking him for his generous offer, but which he cannot accept as a wife and family of children as his "Prospect in the Excise is something."

BURNS (R.) Holograph Note to Mrs. W. Riddell (3 pages) *signed R. B. n. d.*—Another holograph note to Mrs. Riddell *signed R. B.*

BURNS (R.) Holograph Letter to Mrs. Riddell complaining of Rheumatism, and asking "Can you supply me with the Song, 'Let us all be unhappy together,'" *signed R. B.* (1794).

BURNS (Robert) A. L. in the third person to Mrs. W. Riddell, 1795, 2 pp. 8vo.

Thanking her for sending her book, he excuses himself from being able to peruse it for a few days, as he is acting of Supervisor of Excise, "but, as he will in a week or two, again return to his wonted leisure,

he will then pay that attention to Mrs. R——'s beautiful song, 'To thee, loved Inth,' which it so well deserves. . . ."

BURNS (Robert) A. L. s. 3½ pp. 4to to Mrs. Dunlop, *Ellisland, April 11, 1791.*

A very beautiful letter, mainly occupied with the comparison between the refinements of females in an elevated sphere of life, and the qualities of rural lasses. He announces the birth of a son; refers to a former child, godson to Mrs. Dunlop, and whom he says he looks upon as his *chef d'œuvre* in that species of manufacture, as he regards his "Tam o' Shanter" as being his standard performance in the poetical line. "This is the greatest effort my broken arm has yet made."

BURNS (Robert) A. L. s. 1 p. 4to, 15 Jan., 1795, to William Stewart.

"This is a painful disagreeable letter; and the first of the kind I ever wrote—I am truly in serious distress for three or four guineas: can you, my dear Sir, accommodate me? It will, indeed, truly oblige me. These accursed times, by stopping up importation, have for this year, at least, lopt off a full third part of my income, and with my large family, this to me is a distressing matter,—Farewell, & God bless you, R. Burns."

BURNS (Robert). A Poem, 1 p. folio, "O Luvie will venture in, where it daur na weel be seen." Song to the Tune of *The Posie* (Works, vol. iv. p. 323). Written in verses of four lines, with refrain consisting of the last two lines of each verse. Cunningham supposes a

similar song in the same metre, but having the name Jean instead of May, to be the original sketch. As printed by Allan Cunningham it appears in eight-line stanzas.

#### FIRST TRANSLATION OF BURNS INTO ITALIAN.

POESIE di ROBERTO BURNS,

Prima versione Italiana, di ULISSE ORTENSÌ,  
*Author of "Versi," and translator of "Poe's Poems,"*

With Preface in English by JOHN MUIR,  
F.S.A., Scot.

—o—

SIR,

In directing your attention to the above interesting work (which has been very favourably reviewed), I beg to announce that I am acting as Sole Agent in Great Britain, and will be happy to forward copies

*Post Free at 3s. 9d. each.*

Trusting to be favoured with your esteemed order,

I remain, yours respectfully,

ROBERT M'CLURE,  
*Antiquarian Bookseller.*

206 Buchanan Street, Glasgow.

### XXX.—THE COT WHERE BURNS WAS BORN.

*By JAMES D. LAIW.*

WEE Cottage by the Banks o' Doon,  
Your roof is laigh, your rooms are narrow,  
But we may search the warl' aroun',  
And look for lang to get your marrow.  
Mair honor'd are your rugged wa's  
That thro' the years so steively stand,  
Than a' the Castles, College Ha's  
And Kirks in Scotia's classic land!

Here was the humble peasant born  
Who took Dame Nature for his teacher,  
And, holding caste and creed in scorn,  
Became his country's greatest preacher:  
Who ruled thro' Love and Wit by turns,  
And still is KING of all his clan,  
Our darling Bard, rare Robert Burns,  
Above all titles yet—A MAN!

### XXXI.—ROBERT BURNS.

*By ROBERT ELLIOTT, Tamlaghmore, Ontario, Canada.*

THE cold world had little blood to spare  
In her thin heart when thy bright advent fell;  
Meagre the dole she tossed thee; was it well?  
Thou gavest much for little; was it fair?

For answer, hark! there floats a liting air,  
That rising high above the storm's wild swell,  
And calming all disquiet by its spell,  
Leads life beyond the farthest bounds of care.

On one side place hard fare and hoddin  
 grey  
 Contumely's draught — that bitter cup of  
 shame;  
 Against them range the witching smile of  
 May,

A heart to welcome love, a muse to sing,  
 Now let them clash, and 'mid the world's  
 acclaim,  
 Proud glory hastes to crown a ploughman—  
 King!

### XXXII.—THE RAE BURN PORTRAITS OF BURNS.

By JOHN MUIR, F.S.A., Scot.

IT is nearly five years since the forerunners of the present article appeared in the *Kilmarnock Standard*. During that interval many things have been brought to light bearing upon the subject. One gentleman, deeply versed in the antiquities of Dumfries and the adjoining counties, has placed in my hands some important documents relating to William Nicol and bearing on the life and works of Alexander Reid, the painter of the miniature portrait of Burns long amissing, but through the medium of the portrait articles which preceded this and other notes on the subject by the present writer identified as the miniature on ivory from the Watson collection, now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Queen Street, Edinburgh. This "find," if it turns out to be correct, and granting the authenticity of the Kerry miniature, and accepting the copy of Mier's profile for the original shade, completes the list of Burns's portraits as given in the poet's own words in his correspondence.

I do not intend here re-entering into the question of the Reid miniature in the light thrown on the subject by the documents referred to. My business is with Raeburn's portraits, or rather supposed portraits, and one or two matters relating to the portraiture of Burns, which may interest the general reader who cannot reasonably be expected to wax enthusiastic over literary and artistic antiquarianism.

Poor Sir Henry Raeburn! It makes one's heart ache to hear and see what is done in his name. Would that he had remained plain "Henry Raeburn, portrait painter!" But no, the Fates had ordered it otherwise; he was to be successful in his profession; to be knighted by George IV. of blessed mem-

ory, and the year after to be appointed His Majesty's Limner for Scotland; and so he has caused no end of trouble, the unfortunate that he is! So long as Alexander Nasmyth's patriarchal shoulders could bear half-a-hundred odd portraits, in addition to those he actually did paint, connoisseurs, with a view of benefiting posterity and commemorating themselves, were content to dub their "finds" *Nasmyths*. But the last straw, says the Oriental proverb, broke the camel's back, and so Camel-Nasmyth's spine failing, it was necessary to look about for a substitute, and Raeburn being at hand, he was immediately appropriated as the artistic Ship of the Desert, and many are the burdens he has borne across the great Sahara of Connoisseurdom.

One might begin to marvel—had one not quite given up marvelling in this connection—that Peter Taylor's splendid gifts should have been thrown away on house painting, and that he should have been content to leave us the single portrait of Burns, now in Edinburgh, the appearance of which, in 1829, caused such a bitter controversy. One fain hopes that Mr. R. C. Hall's article in the *Glasgow Herald*, and since republished in the second volume of Mr. Ross's *Burnsiana*, has demolished the Taylor myth once and for ever. I have frequently of late heard the wish expressed that Mr. Hall might be induced to reprint in booklet form his admirable little monograph on the Taylor portrait, and his father's reminiscences relating thereto; retaining the introductory portion about Sir Walter Scott and his early school days, which, for some reason or other not very apparent, has been suppressed in some of the reprints of it I have seen in newspapers and elsewhere. These reminiscences and



notes appeal to a wider constituency than that to which the term Burns cult applies, as they contain matter interesting to all students of Scottish literature. I hope Mr. Hall can find leisure to carry out this suggestion, and afford the time from his work on Horrox, the astronomer, whom Carlyle once honoured by writing a critique on one of his works; said critique refused by some saucy editor ("my famous little gentleman," Jeffrey) and so lost to the world and to Horrox's biographer who could have made such good use of it; not to mention the irreparable loss it is to students of Carlyle's early writings, which are not so well known as they ought to be, nor so numerous that we can afford to lose any of them.

No doubt Taylor felt that to paint one true likeness and delineation of a great man was a feat sufficient to satisfy the ambition of a lifetime. But just as I am throwing these notes on paper, a correspondent writes me, that Taylor painted two portraits of Burns—the one now in the Scottish metropolis, and the other in the collection of a private gentleman. One curious piece of information lately communicated to me by an authority of unquestionable repute, is, that notwithstanding the fact that the Poet's widow gave the Constables a certificate in favour of the engraving, by Horsburgh, of Taylor's portrait, the presentation copy of the engraving sent by them in return was never hung up in her house, but was found after Mrs. Burns's decease rolled up and stowed away in a rubbish closet!

At this point two letters relating to Taylor's portrait, which was published recently in Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's "Correspondence," may find a place here. The first letter is from D. Bridges, Jr., an Edinburgh shopkeeper and connoisseur, nicknamed in the "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*" "Director General of the Fine Arts in Scotland."

Bank Street,  
[Edinburgh], Nov. 16, 1829.

My Dear Sir,—Since I had the satisfaction of exhibiting to you the recently discovered portrait of your old acquaintance Burns, I have had the pleasure of receiving from many persons very strong testimonials of its

resemblance to the poet at the period it was painted—among the rest from Clarinda, Peter Hill and his wife, Mrs. Burns, Mr. Syme, Miss Lewars, Sir Walter Scott, etc., and it would delight me, and highly gratify the publishers, were your approval to be found in the number. Your acknowledged taste for the fine arts, and your intimate knowledge of Burns, fully qualify you for such a task. I beg your excuse in thus troubling you.—Being with esteem, yours faithfully,  
D. BRIDGES, Jr.

*C. K. Sharpe to D. Bridges, Jr.*

93 Princes Street,  
[Edinburgh], Monday night.

Dear Sir,—You desire me to give my opinion of the portrait of Burns you some time ago sent to me. I think it extremely like him, and that there can be no doubt about its authenticity. But, like all his other portraits which I have seen, it does not give one the idea of so good-looking a person as he was. There is ever, I think, a fault about the eyes; not that we can expect the fire of the original, but the shape and position appear to me to be faulty. The print of him in the first edition [that is, the first Edinburgh edition; there was no print in the first edition] of his poems I always thought like, but thinner faced than I remember him till Death had begun his conquest. On this head I may mention that Dr. Currie, in his memoir, states his hair to have curled over his forehead. Whenever I saw him his hair hung lank, much as you see it in the print I allude to. I am tempted to think that the picture in question was done by a person of the name of Reid, a portrait painter in Dumfries. I remember well to have seen, in the house of a carver and gilder there—one Stott—who was frequently employed by my father, portraits of Burns and his wife, which Stott told me were done by Reid. I am almost persuaded that I saw this very picture; certain I am that Jean's was a miniature, in a white gown and a cap with a large border. I remember it particularly, because I saw it before I had seen the original. Reid painted both in oil and water-colours, and after he had been some time in Dumfries, went, as I think, to Galloway, where he died. I men-



tion these particulars, as they may perhaps be of use in making enquiries. Some time ago a friend of mine questioned Stott as to Mrs. Burns's picture, of which I was anxious to procure a copy. He said that all the things I remembered must be in her possession. In his I recollect the drawing of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," which David Allan [George Thomson, he means] gave to Burns. The portrait of the poet has some resemblance.

Had Taylor's portrait enjoyed any sort of reputation, connoisseurs would not have failed to make him out as the painter of, say, twenty portraits of Burns. Happily for Taylor, and thrice happily for posterity, he was content to shine as a decorator of Edinburgh fashionable drawing-rooms, and so left the field clear to Nasmyth and Raeburn, both of whom have dearly paid the penalty of greatness. Miers, dealing as he did in profiles, has proved too-shadowy for the nimble-fingered and mellifluous-tongued connoisseurs. Still, it is strange that the original outline shade of Burns, which was to be seen over half a century ago in the shop of Miers' successor, has not been traced to its present owner. This silhouette being a genuine relic, and a work of some importance to artists, has not, of course, the same fascination for the connoisseurs as a bogus article. For one thing, you require to pay a genuine price for a genuine article, and, as a rule, the profit netted in the transaction is not immoderately large. A bogus article, on the other hand, can be had cheap, and, if you know your business, as any dealer does, can be sold at a price, the genuineness of which will be more apparent than that of the article it represents.

Of the many portraits of Burns attributed to Raeburn, I shall only single out that in the possession of Mr. A. C. M'Intyre, 106 West Campbell Street, Glasgow. On several occasions I have had excellent opportunities of examining it carefully. It is a small miniature, half-length portrait, representing a young man of about twenty-five, dressed in holiday attire for the occasion. Originally it had been mounted in a gold frame and set in a morocco case, not unlike a large pocket-book. The picture was found in a chest of

drawers formerly in the possession of a member of the Armour family. Such is the picture, and such is its history. Although I am a little sceptical regarding the authenticity of this portrait, I do not for a moment consider my opinion to be of the same value as that of Mr. M'Intyre, who stands up stoutly for the genuineness of the portrait. He has the reputation of knowing Raeburn's work thoroughly, and for that reason is not likely to keep in his possession a relic altogether beyond authentication. Mr. M'Intyre at least believes the portrait to be Raeburn's work, and to represent Burns. His supposition is that Burns visited Edinburgh some time previous to his triumphant visit in 1786, and that Raeburn, who was then chiefly engaged painting miniatures in water colours, executed the portrait in question.

There is some reason to believe, however, that Raeburn did paint a composition portrait of Burns. There is said to be an autograph letter from the artist to that effect, a copy of which I have beside me, and I have some notes made by the late James Donald, advocate, of a visit he paid to Mrs. Burns, when he saw Raeburn's portrait of her husband, as well as Allan's water-colour drawing, now in the possession of the Poet's granddaughter, who kindly sent me a photograph of it. But this *genuine* Raeburn has not yet been traced to its owner, and perhaps never will. There is a probability, indeed there is almost a certainty, that Raeburn painted this *one* portrait of Burns. But he never painted the others attributed to his pencil. One of these, unearthed in a broker's shop in Toronto, and bought for two pounds, after having been carefully cleaned, turned out to be worth £2000. The owner might as well value it at two millions sterling.

Allan Cunningham says (*British Painters*, edition 1837, vol. 5, pages 221, 222):—

Scotland, during the forty years of Raeburn's labours with the pencil, abounded in eminent men. When he set up his easel on his return from Rome, Burns had just published his poems [at Edinburgh], and commenced his glorious and too brief career. . . . With the exception of Burns and one or two more, he painted all the eminent men of his time and nation, and a gallery of

the illustrious heads of a most brilliant period might almost be compiled from his works alone.

Of the portraits which he painted from 1787 to 1795 I can obtain no better account than the general one I have rendered ; even the catalogues of the Academy give me no assistance, for it was much the practice in those days to announce all likenesses as portraits of ladies or of gentlemen merely.

Such is honest Allan's view of the matter, and in this he agrees with every writer on the subject of Raeburn's life and works, every one of whom take up the negative side of the question. Strange. Perhaps Burns's was one of the portraits catalogued as that of a "gentleman?"

Cunningham also ignores Skirving's claims as having painted Burns's portrait, and he and our old friend Reid are summarily dismissed thus :—"Skirving, an eccentric man, who desired to be thought an epigrammist, and though he had studied in Rome, seldom painted in oils, but drew profiles in crayons of great merit. In the rear of this muster-roll we may place Read [Reid] a wandering limner, who found his way on a time to Dumfries, where he painted the heads of Burns and his Jean on ivory."

If Cunningham created myths and manufactured biography to suit his conception of what the life of Burns ought to be, he was not altogether devoid of the power of blowing other people's windmills into shivers.

### XXXIII.—LATIN VERSION OF "GREEN GROW THE RASHES, O'."

*By FATHER PROUT.*

Curæ corrodunt urbem, rus,  
Et sapientium cellulas,  
Nec vitâ vellem frui plus  
Nî foret ob puellulas.  
Virent arundines !  
At me tenellulas,  
Tædet horarum nisi queis  
Inter fui puellulas !

Divitias avaro dem,  
Insudet auri cumulo,  
Quaerat quocumque modo rem,  
Inops abibit tumulo.  
Virent arundines !  
At me tenellulas,  
Tædet horarum nisi queis  
Inter fui puellulas !

Cum sol obscurat spicula,  
Mî brachio tunc niveo,  
Stringente, fit, amiculâ,  
Rerum dulcis oblivio !  
Virent arundines !  
At me tenellulas,  
Tædet horarum nisi queis  
Inter fui puellulas !

Quas cum de terræ vasculo  
Natura finxit bellulas,  
Tentavit manum masculo,  
Formavit tunc puellulas.  
Virent arundines !  
At me tenellulas,  
Tædet horarum nisi queis  
Inter fui puellulas !

### XXXIV.—BURNS'S SEAL.

THE following correspondence is extracted from *The Journal of the Ex Libris Society*, for June and August, 1893. The first quotation is from an article by Mr. William Bolton, in the June number, entitled—"The Heraldry and Book-plates of some British Poets—Sir Walter Scott, Earl of Dorset, Robert Broomfield, Robert Burns." Speaking of Broomfield's vanity in inventing armorial bearings for himself, and causing them

to be engraved on a book-plate, Mr. Bolton says :—

A far greater poet than Broomfield, though, like him, sprang from the peasant class, namely—Robert Burns—invented for himself armorial bearings, which he used upon a seal, though we have no record that he aspired to a book-plate. Whatever Burns did he did thoroughly and well, and hence it is no wonder that his heraldry was true, though

not granted by the Lyon King of Arms, or the Heralds College. But it is best to let the great poet himself describe the work. In a letter dated March 3rd, 1794, he says to a friend :—

There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a present from a departed friend, which vexes me much. I have gotten one of your Highland pebbles, which I fancy would make a very decent one, and I want to cut my armorial bearings on it; will you be so obliging as enquire what will be the expense of such a business? I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the heralds call it, at all; but I have invented one for myself, so you know I will be chief on the name, and, by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These, however, I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field, azure, a holly-bush, seeded, proper, in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltier-wise, also proper, in chief; on a wreath of the colours, a wood-lark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes: round the top of the crest, "Wood Notes Wild;" at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, "Better a Wee Bush than nae Bield;" by the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters in Arcadia, but a *Stock* and *Horn*, and a *Club*, such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay, in Allan's quarto edition of the "Gentle Shepherd."

This seal Burns used till his death, and is, it is believed, still preserved in what are known as the Burns Reliques. The device was granted later on, we believe, as a real coat of arms to Burns's descendants.

In the current number of the *Ex-Libris Journal* the following letter appears in reference to the above extract :—

*Burns's Seal.*

DEAR SIR,—That *The Journal of the Ex-Libris Society* is read by others than those who are members of that body, though a proof of the increased interest in the fascinating science of book-plates, and a tacit but eloquent acknowledgement of the interest and pleasure derived from perusing the

journal, is perhaps no reason why an outsider should venture to obtrude his remarks upon your readers. If such remarks are permissible, however, I should like to add a few additional particulars to the short article on Burns's Seal, by Mr. William Bolton, which appeared in your June number.

Mr. Bolton is quite right in saying that Burns did not "aspire to a book-plate." On none of the books I have seen which originally belonged to the poet is there any trace of an *Ex-Libris*. Burns contented himself by merely adhibiting his autograph to the fly-leaf, or making a manuscript note on the margin of his books, of which he had a considerable collection. Perhaps if he had lived longer to use his seal he might have had a book-plate done somewhat in the same style. But the seal, after having been commissioned on March 3, 1794, as Mr. Bolton states, only reached the poet in May, 1796, when few opportunities remained for using it.

Your valued contributor is not quite accurate when he says that Burns's descendants used the device on the seal for their armorial bearings. None of the poet's descendants ever registered arms, or were armigerous in any sense. His sons, Colonels William Nicol and James Glencairn Burns, had an enlarged engraving of their father's seal on several relics, and they certainly looked upon the device on the seal as their family arms, but not in a strict heraldic sense. I have in my possession a tumbler once the property of the poet, and afterwards that of Colonel James Burns, on which an enlarged copy of the seal is engraved; and Colonel James' daughter, in sending me the gift, referred to the device thus: "My father had the inscription and his father's coat of arms engraved on the glass." Two years ago I was anxious to get an exact copy of the seal and have a *fac-simile* of it executed for literary purposes. Its present owner, Mrs. Burns Thomas, the poet's great-granddaughter, kindly sent me an impression on wax, from which I had a *fac-simile* made, a copy of which I enclose you. It is the only exact *fac-simile* of the seal I know to exist. I have a great number of different representations of the seal, which is a common device with Burns's societies, etc.



When Mr. Bolton speaks of the device on the seal having been used as "a real coat of arms by Burns's descendants," he perhaps alludes to the fact that the Chevalier James Burnes, on being invested by King William IV. with the Guelphic Order of Hanover, incorporated the poet's seal, with other devices, in the arms he registered in the Lyon Office, where they are described thus:—

*Arms*:—Ermine, on a bend azure, an escocheon, or, charged with a holly bush, surmounted by a crook and bugle horn saltyreways, all proper, being the device of the poet Burns, and on a chief gules, the white horse of Hanover between two eastern crowns, or in allusion to the Guelphic Order conferred upon James Burnes, K.H., by King William IV., and to the distinguished services of him and his brother in India.

*Crests*:—On the dexter side, one of augmentation, in allusion to the devotion to their country, shown by the late Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Alexander Burnes, C.B., and Lieutenant Charles Burnes, out of a mural crown, for pale, vert, and gules, the rim inscribed "Cabool," in letters argent, a demi-eagle displayed, transpierced by a javelin in bend similar proper; on the sinister, that previously borne, viz.: Issuant from an eastern crown, or an oak tree shivered, renewing its foliage proper.

*Motto*:—"Ob Patriam Vulnera Passi."

The reference under *Crests*, in the above extract from the Lyon register, "On the sinister, that previously borne," doubtless refers to the first coat of arms, with the Campbell bearing, which Dr. Burnes registered. On the origin of the family from Walter Campbell of Burnhouse (a refugee from Argyle, and supposed scion from the ducal family of that name) having been shown to be erroneous, the Chevalier Burnes had the Campbell bearing removed from the shield by a fresh matriculation.

With regard to the two mottoes on the poet's seal, I have only been able to trace one of them to its source—"Wood Notes Wild," a very favourite expression of Burns's,

and one often to be met in his writings. I remembered to have seen it somewhere, but, unfortunately, I neglected to follow the excellent advice of Captain Cuttle, and to make a note of it. However, a few months ago, in reading over one of my favourite poems from Milton, I came upon it, and now I am determined to act up to the advice of the methodical captain, and quote the following from "Il Penseroso," 131-4:—

Then to the well-trod stage anon  
If Jonson's learnéd sock be on,  
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

I am not quite sure, however, that Burns took his motto direct from Milton; I rather think he did not. He never used the expression till his sojourn in Edinburgh in 1786-7, and the probability is that he first saw it in Henry Mackenzie's review of his *Kilmarnock* edition, in the *Lounger* for 9th December, 1786, in which the "Man of Feeling" uses the expression which afterwards became such a favourite with the poet. Although Burns frequently mentions Milton's "Paradise Lost," he never once alludes to his minor works or his prose writings.

I have not been able to trace to its origin the second motto, "Better a wee bush than nae bield." It is a proverbial expression; at least, I have heard it used often by my grandmother, who certainly did not borrow it directly from Burns, who was no favourite of hers. In conclusion, I may state that Burns had three different seals, letters of his being in existence bearing the impress of (1) an elongated oval seal, showing at full length a figure, not very well cut, of Orpheus, or perhaps Sappho, with harp in hand; (2) a seal bearing the impression of a heart transpierced by two cross arrows; and (3) the seal referred to above. The first two were lost by the poet, and the third is now in the possession of his great-granddaughter. I have a seal said to have been used by Burns, but as I have never been able to trace an impression of it on any of his letters, I am rather sceptical regarding its authenticity.



## XXXV.—MIERS' SHADE OF BURNS.

By JOHN MUIR, F.S.A., Scot.

*Profile.*—Robert Burns, by J. Miers.

*Date.*—Executed at Edinburgh, in 1787.

*Artist.*—Very little appears to be known regarding this artist, further than that he executed silhouette portraits—"on a plan entirely new, which preserves the most exact symmetry and animated expression of the features"—in Edinburgh and Leeds, in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In 1787 he took a silhouette of Burns, who distributed copies to various friends.

*Description.*—Small bust turned to right; dated in ink 1787. With the following card of Miers, and letter of Burns, referring to this portrait, and the artist's system of silhouetting:—

"Perfect likeness in miniature profile, taken by J. Miers, Leeds, and reduced on a plan entirely new, which preserves the most exact symmetry and animated expression of the features, much superior to any other method. Time of sitting, one minute. *N.B.*—He keeps the original shades, and can supply those he has once taken with any number of copies. Those who have shades by them may have them reduced to any size, and dress'd in the present taste. Orders at any time addressed to him at Leeds, in Yorkshire, will be punctually dispatched."

The letter is without name, address, or date, or any other mark that would lead to the identification of the person to whom it was sent:—

To— — — [1787]?

Miers, lately in Edinburgh, now in Leeds, has the original shade, from which he did mine. However, if his lordship wishes it, he shall have it to get copied. Do write soon. Adieu.—

ROBERT BURNS.

*Dimensions.*—Oval silhouette, 4 inches by 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

*Locale.*—Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Queen Street, Edinburgh. Catalogue No. 156.

*History.*—Believed to be the first portrait of Burns taken during his visit to Edinburgh. The "original shade," referred to by the Poet, is lost. Bequeathed to the Gallery by W. F. Watson, Esq.

*Bibliography.*—Hogg & Motherwell's Burns, 1834, Vol. I., 185; Vol. II., frontispiece. Chambers' Burns, 1880, Vol. II., 167, 180; Vol. IV., 11, 161. Notes and Queries, 7th S. xii., pp. 268, 371.

*Notes.*—The letter in all probability was sent to Alexander Dalziel, factor to the Earl of Glencairn, the patron of Burns. The allusion in the note to "his lordship" would suggest that Lord Glencairn had asked his factor to enquire of the Poet if his profile was to be had, and, if so, from whom. In Mr. Scott Douglas' Burns there is only one letter given from Burns to Mr. Dalziel, but the above note cannot have formed any part of that communication. It is easier to fix the date of the note than to guess to whom it was addressed. It must have been written some time previous to April, 1787, when the Edinburgh edition appeared, containing Beugo's engraving from the Nasmyth portrait, the publication of which, as a vignette, and as a separate print on India paper soon after, would invalidate the silhouette as a portrait of Burns. Editors have not been careful to distinguish Miers' silhouette from Beugo's engraving. On May 3, 1787, Burns wrote to the Rev. Hugh Blair:—

"I have sent you a proof impression of Beugo's work for me, done on India paper, as a trifling but sincere testimony, with what heart-warm gratitude, I am, etc."

On the following day he sent a poetical address to Mr. William Tytler, of Woodhouselee, in which this verse occurs:—

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,  
A trifle scarce worthy your care;  
But accept it, good sir, as a mark of regard,  
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Overlooking the chronology, editors have hastily concluded that the "head" which ac-

companyed the address to Mr. Tytler must have been no other than the shade by Miers. Even the Curator of the Gallery, in his catalogue, falls into this error. But it was a very unusual thing in the eighteenth and beginning of the present century to describe a portrait as a head. One example, which I quote from another writer, will suffice—that

of Peter Hill, in his Late Catalogue of Books, 1800, where the following entry occurs:—

“Burns’s Poems, 2 volumes. *Head, new and neat*; 8s. Edinburgh, 1798.”

This, I think, is conclusive. Besides, why would Burns send a copy of his profile when he could present his friends with a copy of his book containing a really fine portrait?

### XXXVI.—THE GENIUS OF BURNS.

By REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

At the celebration of the Anniversary of Burns, held at the Wall House, Williamsburgh, Long Island, U.S.A., on January 25th, 1878, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, in responding to the toast of the evening, “The genius of Burns,” spoke as follows:—When Robert Burns was alive, if you had been called upon to ask the men who were the judges of men, what man in all Scotland and in all England would continue to be celebrated through the scores and hundreds of years, I think it likely his name would have been mentioned last upon the list; but the judges, the lawyers, the medical men, the clergymen—all the men that stood foremost, and that petted and patronized him, have gone, for the most part, below the horizon. They may be remembered by the archæologist, but the peasant and the man who received their affections as a dole, is universal, and wherever there are men with hearts and susceptibilities Robert Burns’s name is precious to-day. To remember him requires that you should form some judgment of what the relations of men are in the matter of benefit to the race. I hold that every man who contributes anything to the welfare of his kind is a benefactor, and that, therefore, every man that brings a harvest out of the field, to that extent is a benefactor of his kind. Every man that constructs in his shop the instruments by which civilization promotes commerce, is also a benefactor. Whoever invents machinery that abbreviates labour, and by so much contributes to set men free from the bondage of toil, is a more eminent benefactor; all men that are promoting science are benefactors of their race; but after all these are men that mainly are working to the external

condition—they are taking care of men who are as yet in the flesh and surrounded by the material world. We do not undervalue but we rank their benefaction. But inside of man there is another man, and the outside is as to the inside man what the kernel is to the shuck or the husk, and excellent as it is to be a benefactor of men in their external conditions, he is the true benefactor who touches the concentric, the inner man. And this distinguishes those that feed ideas, feed the moral wants, feed the affections and the susceptibilities of mankind. But of these there is still a gradation. There are some that are, as it were, the laity, and others that are, as it were, ministers, and the poet stands highest of all. He stands higher than the clergy, with all deference to the present profession. He stands higher than the philosopher, because to the poet is given to understand the innermost meaning of God in all nature—to sort out from the many relations the things, the events, the character, and to present them to the imagination and the subtle heart of the imagination, that lies even back of the intellectual imagination. It is for common men to see things as common men see them, but to a man who is ordained of God to be a poet there is hovering around about every object in nature another glory, something more subtle, something that has more meaning in it than strikes the ordinary common sense of men, and when he sees it, though he be a poet of colour he transfers to the canvas the tree, the beast, the bird, the flower, the human form, but glorified as he sees it, and as he teaches other men afterward to see it when they have seen his picture, and he whose canvas is paper and whose

colours are words discerns the subtle and innermost nature of things and teaches men to see them, and so interprets to the best and innermost part of men the best and innermost sentiment of all that is good in human life and in the great round and realm of nature.

This is the position to which must be assigned for all coming time Robert Burns—a true poet, made not by the schools, brought up not by any circumstances of external culture or assistance. He burst out, and almost from the soil. He came as a flower comes in the Spring. We say that he was a man of the people. No; he was far above the people. He was ordained to be an interpreter of God to his kind then and forevermore. I rank Burns not by a literary standpoint. I regard him as one of the workers that has taken hold of the highest relations of mankind. If there was one man in England that had a better theory than he who had no theory, on the subject of the rights of men—if there was one man whose stature was greater than his in defending humanity, I know not what name it is; but whatever name it is, from the time of John Milton, or Oliver Cromwell, or Hampden, or Pym, or any other, there is not a man that has left the lesson of the rights of men more ineffaceable than Robert Burns. But his simple songs in regard to the innate rights and dignities of human nature have touched the consciousness and the understanding of the race, and around and around the globe his song that “A man’s a man for a’ that,” has become more than literature, it has become a life; it has melted into the consciousness of men, and ten thousand men in every part of the world have been the disciples of Robert Burns, straightened up, felt the inspiration of dignity, the honour of a true manhood, and learned it from a few lines. And he is one of those men who has educated man to manliness, and that is no small education, gentlemen. Then Robert Burns, I think, has taught men—pardon me, I would not shock the sense of reverence of any of you—but I think Robert Burns has taught men the thoughts of God in nature more than a great many pulpits have—and perhaps I have a right to say that—when he taught

men to look upon the wee, modest daisy. I cannot conceive of any man’s looking upon a daisy and not having it suffused with tenderness and beauty. Now, a daisy is a daisy, says the market man; oh, yes, a daisy is a daisy, says the dainty gentleman; but a daisy is a great deal more than a daisy since Robert Burns’s day. It is a heart, it is a sentiment, it is a life, and no man can look upon it, nor upon its fellows, who is a true disciple of Burns, without feeling something of its divinity, its susceptibility to the best of nature. That love of things beautiful in nature we have largely learned—at any rate, it has been greatly developed and educated by the simple strains of Robert Burns. And then, much as we may read of patriotism, much as we may feel the inspiration which comes from more formal teaching, that subtle influence that develops in men’s souls, has flown out of his strains, and taught men to love their country and love their kind, to have a heart that is open in pity to all the things that are beautiful, not only in nature but in human life, and to have a heart open in pity to all these phases of men which men most meet with.

Gentlemen, in my place it might be thought it would be my duty to make some words in regard to the infelicity of Burns’s life. Let the dead bury their dead. On that subject I have nothing to say except that Burns’s misfortunes and personal troubles in part have made him what he is—the prophet of humanity; for as I read his life, there are many things that never could have been said or done if he had been other in his experience than what he was—a sorrowful man, a sinning man, a broken down man—and of the millions that live, how many are there that have not had a common experience in some respect with him? He had a compassion upon those that sinned, because he knew what infirmities were; he had most exquisite strains of tenderness for the infirmities of mankind. Now great evils are, in the economy of God, the manure for great benefits. How bad a thing is war; organized cruelty. How great are the fruits which are developed among heroic warriors. How sad a thing is sickness, and yet what sanctities it has brought around the couch in the household! Who would



know what self-sacrificing love was, what tenderness was, what disinterestedness was, if he had not seen a father and mother watching around the helpless infant; if he had not seen the charity of the Good Samaritan; and in Burns, that he had touched the depths of human suffering and sorrow, gave to his notes a meaning and a moral power that I think never could have been given if he had had a prosperous life. And so on in all these ways I regard him as ministering to the wants of humanity. I stand where I am set apart to minister to men in sacred things, but I feel as though Robert Burns stood on the same level, and was ordained of God to be a minister of sacred things to the human race. There were levities in his life—and who has them not?—but the fruits of his life and the elements that give him his power and will continue that power to the end of time, these are the elements which minister to the common sense of the human race. Here stands the man above the engineer, above the architect, above the scholar, above the literary critic, above the high-flying poet; he stands a man among them, weeping their tears, feeling their woes, echoing their groans, comforting their sorrows, inspiring courage over

the events of life, and he belongs to the human race because he has comforted the human race in his songs. Let us bury whatsoever in him was unfortunate, and thank God here was a man whose crushing brought out the wine of consolation for his fellow-men; here was a man that, speaking from low down on the earth, found that millions of men were by that very reason his sympathetic hearers. I honour his memory. I bless God for his life. Let his songs go singing on. I trust that he too, now singing chants unspeakably higher than any that mortal man can imagine, looks down with pitying eye upon the millions of men whom he tried to succour, and whom he has helped, and who will meet him in more glorious climes, where the misfortunes of this life are rounded up, where that which was groaning through imperfection here shall have attained to its angelic proportions there, and where all that was missing shall be found, and all that needed mending shall be eternally beautiful. I honour Robert Burns as a minister to the human race. By his poetry he insinuated into the innermost sentiments of mankind a tenderness, a humanity and a patriotism—and what more can any man do?

### XXXVII—BURNS AS A FREEMASON.

BURNS became a Mason in 1781. His mother lodge was St. David's, Tarbolton, now Lodge St. David's, Tarbolton, Mauchline, No. 133 on the roll of Grand Lodge. Either at, or very shortly after, the date of his initiation, Lodge St. James's, Tarbolton, No. 135, had been working in combination with St. David's; but at the end of 1781 the two lodges separated again, Burns holding with those who went in for the restarting of St. James's on its own account. Henceforward, therefore, it was with the latter that—so far as Ayrshire is concerned—Burns figured most prominently as a Mason. The minutes of three of its meetings were written in full with his own hand—which would argue that for some time he had been either appointed or acting secretary—while about 30 other minutes are signed by him as Depute-Master. And it scarcely needs recalling that it was to his brethren of

St. James's that, when his chest was already on its way to Greenock, and he had, in his own words, penned "the last song he should ever measure in Caledonia," he addressed the pathetic Farewell, "Adieu! a heart-warm, fond adieu." The minute book of St. James's, it may be mentioned, is jealously preserved by the lodge, despite many approaches made to them from time to time by Burns Museum authorities, and other relic hunters, to induce them to part with it. The genuineness of the treasure is attested by a holograph certificate on the fly-leaf from Mr. James M'Kie, of Kilmarnock, by whom it was carefully rebound nearly forty years ago.

Burns was 22 years of age when he "first saw the light" in a Masonic sense, and some six months subsequent to his initiation he had attained the degree of Master Mason. As Robert Chambers has observed, "he



entered into Freemasonry with all the enthusiasm which might have been expected from his social and philanthropic character," and the minutes of Tarbolton Lodge show that he was one of the most regular attenders at its meetings, whereat, as the "Farewell" lets us know, "oft, honoured with supreme command," he presided. By-and-by the time came when he was to be honoured by brethren not only practising Masonry under more august conditions than those obtaining in the Tarbolton public-house where he had been "made," or, again to quote Robert Chambers, in the "little stifling cottage-room" at Mauchline of later-date meetings, but amongst whom were to be found men of the highest repute for worth and ability in Scotland. It was on 28th November, 1786, that Burns first set foot in Edinburgh. He had arrived there, on his own statement, without a single acquaintance or a single letter of introduction. But, happening in course of a solitary ramble around to meet with an Ayrshire masonic brother, Mr. James Dalrymple of Orangefield, he was by him taken to a meeting of Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, held on 7th December—nine days after his arrival in Edinburgh—and there and then introduced first to a brother of no less eminence than the Hon. Henry Erskine, Past Master of the lodge, and then to the Earl of Glencairn, who was a brother-in-law of Mr. Erskine. That same night, before going to bed, Burns wrote to his friend Gavin Hamilton in Mauchline, stating, *inter alia*, that "My Lord Glencairn and the Dean of Faculty, Mr. H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy and the eighth wise man in the world." At this same meeting, moreover, the poet must have seen others of the biggest Edinburgh celebrities of the day. Because it so happened that the night in question was that of the annual invitation to Canongate Kilwinning of Grand Lodge, among the officials of which at that time were the Duke of Athole, the Earl of Balcarres, Lord Haddo, Sir William Forbes, the Hon. Colonel James Murray, Sir James Hunter Blair, the Earl of Buchan, John Clerk of Eldin (Lord Eldin), Mr. Grant of Monymusk, Francis Lord Napier, Dr. Nathaniel Spens, the Earl of

Morton, James Wolfe Murray (Lord Cringletie), etc.

This was Burns's first experience of Masonry in Edinburgh; and another, no less memorable with him, took place a few weeks later on. Concerning this, he writes, under date 14th January, 1787:—"I went to a Mason Lodge yesternight, where the Most Worshipful Grand Master Charteris [afterwards Lord Elcho] and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant; the different Lodges of the town were present in all their pomp. The Grand Master who presided, with great solemnity, and honour to himself as a gentleman and Mason, among other general toasts gave 'Caledonia and Caledonia's Bard—brother Burns,' which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck, and, trembling in every nerve, made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, 'Very well, indeed'—which set me something to rights again." There is little doubt, we fancy, that with his masonic experience, superadded to his native gifts of address, the poet's reply must have confirmed the *impresment* of the "multiplied honours" to which he refers.

The next recorded "honour" paid to him by the brethren, is to be found—somewhat clumsily worded—in the minutes of a meeting of Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, held on 1st February, 1787. It goes thus:—"The R. W. Master having observed that Brother Robert Burns was at present in the lodge—who is well known as a great poetic writer, and for a late publication of his works which have been universally commended—submitted that he should be assumed a member of this lodge, which was unanimously agreed to, and he was assumed [affiliated] accordingly." But what, it may fairly be presumed, was regarded by Burns as the chief compliment paid to him by his brother masons of the Scottish metropolis was received one month later than this. At an extra full meeting of the lodge, held on 1st March, 1787, he was formally appointed Poet-Laureate of

the Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No. 2. The honour was conferred on him at the hands of the then R.W. Master, Alexander Ferguson of Craigdarroch, advocate, whose powers in a well-known contest, Burns was a year or two afterwards to commemorate in his poem of "The Whistle," in which, as will be remembered, the winner is described as :—

"Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law."

This appointment to the Laureateship, as many masons are aware, was afterwards made the subject of a large and ably executed picture, in which the poet is represented advanced to the Master's chair to receive from the latter the laureate wreath or chaplet, and in which are introduced between fifty and sixty of the distinguished of the fraternity of the day members of the Lodge or visiting brethren, for obtaining correct likenesses of whom, the artist, Brother Stuart Watson, R.S.A., was afforded every facility.

After these Edinburgh experiences, there remains but little in the later masonic career of Burns that calls for reference in detail. About a couple of months after the last mentioned incident he proceeded on his Border tour, with his young friend Robert Ainslie, in course of which both were received into the royal arch, the minute of the event, which took place on 19th May, 1787, being as follows :—"At a general encampment of

St. Abb's Lodge, the following brethren were made royal-arch masons—Robert Burns, from the Lodge of St. James, Tarbolton, Ayrshire; and Robert Ainslie, from the Lodge of St. Luke, Edinburgh. Robert Ainslie paid one guinea admission dues, but, on account of Robert Burns's remarkable poetic genius, the encampment agreed to admit him *gratis*, and considered themselves honoured by having a man of such shining abilities for one of their companions." On 25th June following, he was back in Edinburgh, and attended the meeting for the annual election of office-bearers of Canongate Kilwinning; and after his Highland tour, he attended several meetings of the same; always, to his evident gratification, being recognised as Poet-Laureate of the Lodge, and always occupying the same seat, in the corner below the dais, to the left of the president. He left Edinburgh finally in February, 1788, and in June ensuing took possession of the farm of Ellisland, on the Nith; and thereafter, as all men know, got an appointment in the Excise, and settled in the town of Dumfries. Here, in his own words, he continued his "mason-making practice;" and in the words of his contemporary and biographer, Heron, "had soon the fortune to gain the notice of several gentlemen better able to estimate the true value of such a mind as his than were his fellow-peasants."

### XXXVIII.—REV. S. R. CROCKETT ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Edinburgh Burns Club, January 25th, 1894.*

*Reprinted from the SCOTSMAN.*

I FELT myself both "ower young an' ower blate" to undertake a duty so ancient and honourable as that which is involved in proposing the "Immortal Memory" at the Metropolitan Burns Club of Scotland on the night of the festival of Saint Robin. But when I hesitated, standing a wee in a swither, the office was strongly pressed upon me by your excellent secretary, Mr. Alexander Anderson, a poet himself, who would have done the duty far better than I. But they that will to Cupar, maun to Cupar. A "Surfaceman" poet called me to speak to the

ploughman poet's praise, and being a Scot, how could I be recreant? Besides, the "Surfaceman" is an exceedingly "bairdly chiel," and I am a man of peace. So I said "Yes," because I did not know what might have happened if I had said "No." A little bird whispered to me that the Burns Club needs some gowden guineas to help to pay the piper after a certain play in the Music Hall. My advice is that the Club depute their secretary to interview the wealthier members of their organisation one by one—in a quiet upper chamber somewhere—and

allow him full discretionary powers and no questions asked. The piper would soon be paid, with maybe a nest-egg over forbye to cheer the heart of the treasurer. Yet it is a task almost unique in its difficulty to which your generous kindness has called me. You ask me to call to your remembrance that which is eternally unforgettten and unforgettable. You ask me to express in your presence some of those deeper and stronger feelings which lie at the roots of our natures. We Scots are naturally reticent, and on any other subject but Robert Burns we can hardly be accused of carrying our hearts upon our sleeves. Yet in this place, and on this occasion, Burns has been so often eulogised that it would be unfitting and presumptuous in me simply to add one more pæan. The time has long gone past when eulogies were useful literary products, and I have not the art to make them ornamental. But, on the other hand, it were still more out of place to say a word in dispraise of him whose head lies low these hundred years nearly, down by where the Nith water slips under the bridges of Dumfries. God forbid that to-night we should cast one stone at so noble a publican as Robert Burns! Moreover, it is the right of every Briton to be tried by his peers; and when Robert Burns is condemned by the ignorant or the prejudiced, it is within his right to claim the inalienable right of appeal, and to say—"I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat." Before whom, then, shall Robert Burns "thole his assize" if not before his brethren the poets? Who but they are his peers? Let us empanel a jury of two—a small one, it is true—but then, though few, exceedingly fit, and even to some extent representative. Moreover, they shall be Christian poets—avowedly so by sympathy and faith. If William Wordsworth speaks for Britain and John Greenleaf Whittier for America, neither country has reason to be ashamed of its representative. These two men are, distinctly and typically, the poets of the Christian morality, if not at its broadest, at least in its sincerest and most unpromising aspect. Let us, therefore, in a single verse or two, take their testimonies ere we pass on. Seven years after the poet's death, standing on the banks of the Nith,

near the house where Robert Burns passed away, William Wordsworth wrote thus—at a time (be it remembered) when there were few, especially among those who professed the Christian religion, to speak well of the dead poet:—

Through busiest street and loneliest glen  
Are felt the flashes of his pen;  
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when  
Bees fill their hives;  
Deep in the general heart of men  
His power survives.

Sweet mercy! to the gates of Heaven  
This minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;  
The rueful conflict, the heart riven  
With vain endeavour,  
And memory of earth's bitter leaven  
Effaced for ever.

Nothing truer or more generous has ever been written or spoken of Robert Burns than that, and the poet of the Rotha side and Grasmere Lake, with his solemn horse face and his strait-laced didactic precision, puts to shame many a modern advanced critic, who from the heights of the scorner's chair pats Robert Burns on the head and "damns him with faint praise." Let us turn to the New Englander. Whittier is not well known among Scotsmen—not so well as he will one day be. He is one of those "humbler poets, whose songs gushed from the heart," whom we read mostly when hand and brain are tired. And for this very reason he will last. He suffered all his life from an uncommon complaint. He was so painfully conscientious that, rather than run the risk of doing what was wrong, he often did nothing at all. This was enough to prevent him from becoming a successful business man in the State of wooden nutmegs; and might be supposed to incapacitate the Quaker poet for fully appreciating Burns. But what does he say of him?

O'er rank and pomp, as he had seen,  
I saw the man uprising,  
No longer common or unclean,  
The child of God's baptising.

With clearer eyes I saw the worth  
Of life among the lowly;  
The Bible at his Cottar's hearth  
Has made my own more holy.

Let those who never erred forget  
His worth in vain bewailings:



Sweet soul of song, I own my debt  
Uncancelled by his failings !

But think, while falls the shade between  
The erring one and heaven,  
That he who loved like Magdalen,  
Like her may be forgiven.

Give lettered pomp to teeth of time,  
So "Bonny Doon" shall tarry ;  
Blot out the epic's stately line,  
But spare his "Highland Mary."

It may perhaps help us to understand what Burns has done for Scotland if we try to imagine a Scotland without him. I know it is a difficult, an almost unrealisable thought. We could as soon think of a Scotland without ministers—(laughter)—as a Scotland without Burns. But for once let us imagine that it is all a mistake. We are gathered here to celebrate what never happened. Never on any 25th of January was a child born to William Burness in an auld clay biggin' by the Water of Ayr. Never did any "blast o' Januar' win' blaw handsel in on Robin." Let us deal with the case according to the accepted methods of the higher criticism. They are well known. They have been applied to many old and venerable beliefs, and have ruthlessly cut away the personalities of many great authors. Homer is not ; Ossian is not ; and we "hae oor doots about Shakespeare." Now, if you look at the matter carefully, you will see clearly that Burns is a solar myth. Nothing less ! This is the way that it is done. Burns may be translated in the French language Ruisseau. The word means a number of little streams, signifying the various sources from which the full fledged myth arose. The form Ruisseaux is sometimes signed by the so-called Robert Burns ; therefore manifestly this is one of these Nature personifications which attach themselves to the youth of every literature. It is a "Drapeau des Mécontents"—the standard of revolt against old conventions. There was also a movement of the same kind in France, which at the time of the French Revolution crystallised itself into a corresponding myth under the name of Jean Jacques Rousseau. It is infinitely improbable, if not wholly impossible, that in two countries at the same time there could dwell two authors of the same revolutionary

tendencies, writing practically under the same name. Therefore neither ever existed. *Quod erat demonstrandum.* Logic is logic, and we had better all go home. That is the higher literary criticism, and its results are eminently satisfactory. Well, let us provisionally accept these iconoclastic results, and see what we would make of Scotland. There was never any Robert Burns, we shall say. Ayr is swept clean of its memories. Nothing remains but a thriving watering-place, and a large number of respectable burghers and Magistrates. There is no Burns's country. Kirk Alloway is but a ruin of harled masonry. No sacred Saturday nights were ever held in the home of William Burness to be enshrined in imperishable verse by his son. Ding the Cottar's Saturday Nicht out of your minds, for there never was such a thing. Can you do it? No ; I fear me ; no more than you can ding doon the "Carritches" or make the work of John Knox as though it had not been. It were indeed a blank Scotland without Burns—scarce imaginable. No "Bonny Jean," no "Highland Mary," no "Mary Morrison," no "Lament for Glencairn," ending with the thrilling words which Burns owed to his early familiarity with Isaiah :—

The bridegroom may forget the bride,  
Was made his wedded wife yestreen ;  
The monarch may forget the crown  
That on his head an hour hath been.  
The mother may forget the child  
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee ;  
But I'll remember thee Glencairn,  
And a' that thou hast done for me !

Of what should our hearts sing when we are glad, if never on blythe forenichts "Duncan Gray cam' here to Woo?" What might all the young lasses do if never "Yestreen a braw wooer cam' doon the lang glen?" Can we never listen more to the searching pathos of "My Nanny's Awa'?" And as for "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonny Doon," are they to be no more to broad Scotland than the banks and braes of the Water of Leith, which only Mr. Louis Stevenson has a good word for? Scotland would look the same, I suppose, had there never been a Burns. But not to me, and I think not to you. Afton Water is fair, no doubt, sweet-scented birks set about it ; the wimpling burnies running



down into it clear as crystal. But what had it been to us if never the lad from the ploughtail had wandered beside it, with his bonnet in his hand, as we see him in Naysmith's picture?

Flow gently, sweet Afton, amang thy green braes,  
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;  
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,  
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

In my own country, the knowes are green and starred with the white sheep. I love to look upon them. But most I love the pastures of Cluden, for still about them we heard the voice of the singer "Ca' the yowes to the knowes—the bonny knowes o' Cluden." And as we go down into Annandale and the sun is low, would the landscape have been so fair to our eyes had he not told how—

Sweet fa's the eve on Craigeiburn,  
And blythe awakes the morrow;  
But a' the pride o' spring's return  
Can yield me nocht but sorrow.

And lastly (as we say professionally), how would we clasp hands and part without the blithesome comradeship of "Auld Lang Syne" to cheer us on our way? Now that is my sermon. But as I hope that you have, all been in the habit of hearing many sermons, you will not expect me to depart so far from immemorial custom as to sit down without a personal application. If you have approved in any measure of my sermon, I trust that you will also like my "pirlicue." I have always thought it a wonderful proof of the forgiving nature of Galloway people that we have been willing to overlook the great mistake of Burns's life—which was, his being born in Ayrshire. He ought to have seen to it in time, and been born in Galloway—if possible, in the parish of Balmaghie. I well remember an old man telling me that when Burns's poems came out, many people in Galloway would not read them because it was then held as an article of faith that no good thing could come out of Ayrshire. The prejudice is dying down, I hope—I had almost said, I fear. In old days they used to hang an Ayrshireman when they caught him over the border out of his native Carrick. Now, instead, they let him all the best farms. But Burns did his best to disassociate himself from his early surroundings by coming

and living on the borders of Galloway just across the Nith. And it is said—I do not vouch for the truth of it—that whenever he wanted to write any of his finer poems, such as "Scots Wha Hae" or anything like that, he came over to Galloway to do it! There is nothing bigoted about Galloway folk, and they allow that Burns was born in Ayrshire. But the misfortune followed him all through life. He died young! Now what I want to say before I close is that the common people are in danger of forgetting about Burns down there—all throughout the farm towns and villages of the south country—and that for a reason easily remediable. A year or two ago I was in a little bookseller's shop in the south when a rough country chiel came in, and in a kind of shamefaced way he asked, "Hae ye Burns's poem about the 'Moose' to sell?" The bookseller had no copy of Burns save a gilt-edged table book of selections at 3s. 6d., and this did not suit the pocket of the ploughman. He departed unsatisfied at that time. But the scene told me a tale of a real need. It is a good cheap edition of Burns that is wanted—one carefully edited, liberally printed, and plainly bound, which would sell at sixpence, or even a shilling, and so be scattered broadcast over Scotland. Could any work be worthier of the Edinburgh Burns Club? Suppose we celebrate the anniversary of 1895 by issuing such an edition. I am told that the Club languishes a little for lack of a function and a mission. Such an edition of the works of the great poet of Scotland issued by the Edinburgh Burns Club would be a national memorial as worthy as any. Besides, are we so sure that we read him ourselves, or that we all understand him when we do read him? I should greatly admire to have the setting of a paper—a stiff examination paper—to the gentlemen who sit down to this dinner, upon these conditions—50 per cent. to be required for a pass—no pass, no dinner! Cribbing and prompting strictly forbidden! Shall we begin with the chairman? Suppose we put the first question of the Burns Carritches to him—"Can you translate and explain etymologically the following expression, 'A daimen icker in a thrave's a sma' request?'" Then we might go on to the vice-chair and see if he was

entitled to any dinner, with the test question, "Distinguish carefully the precise meaning of the active verbs in the following verse, and conjugate them fully :—

'Thou never braindgt, an' fecht, an' fliskit,  
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,  
An' spread abreed thy weel-filled brisket,  
Wi' pith an' power,  
Till sprittly knowes wad rair't an' riskit,  
An' slypit ower."

The members of the Burns Club will now be able to gauge their chances of a dinner, if they decide to institute such a qualification and appoint me perpetual examiner. I should specially enjoy going over the papers of some of my old University professors ; and as they went home dinnerless, they would learn how it felt to be "spun." At this season of the year it might have a good effect upon the approaching orals and degree examinations ; and the grateful undergraduates would doubtless at the very least erect me a statue opposite that of the late Sir David Brewster, which would be a useful thing at the time of the Rectorial election. They might even appoint me Lord Rector on the strength of my services. Every "chronic" would work hard for my return, and if I thought there

was a chance, I might even stand for a vacant ward in the city, and so become a practical politician—which, I am given to understand, is the leading qualification for the office of Lord Rector in the Universities of Scotland. At any rate the Burns Club may think over the matter for a year or two and let me know. But after our daffin' and our sermonising, the toast remains. A very good and complete gospel might be preached from the text, "A man's a man for a' that !" You have honoured me by asking me to propose "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns." I am unworthy of the high honour. But I am proud to serve you, and to say a word for the "marvellous ploughman." We know his faults. They were never hidden. For and against him all has been said. Worst and best, concerning Burns there is no new thing to say. But after all the man remains. Definitely, he was a man. "For a' that an' a' that, Robin's a man for a' that !" And just because he is a man he touches our hearts, and draws us together in the brotherhood of comrades and the kinship of the race. I propose to you, gentlemen, without one word more, "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns."

### XXXIX.—REV. GEORGE MURRAY ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Edinburgh "Ninety" Burns Club, January 25th, 1894.*

*Reprinted from the SCOTSMAN.*

My Lord, Burns brothers of the Ninety, and gentleman, our hero, were he of the second class, by this time had been trite, so quickly do these anniversaries come round, and so many are the lips that speak his praise. But still the Burns cult grows. His star lingers in the heavens, yet not a star of lessening ray. Around his memory this night there is a freshness as of the coming spring. In our day happy revival has occurred of interest in our ancient Scottish speech. There is quite a literary boom upon the lowly subject of the Lowland tongue. And this of necessity gives accent to a striking feature in the genius of Burns—his command of the fine flowing instrument that lay so ready to his hand. He charms us by the mere perfection of his form.

He not only excels in that respect all who went before, but has compelled the imitation of all who have come since. Much was due, no doubt, as the real secret of style, to his simple strength of thought—he is so direct always, so unaffected and courageous. He had a passion for the truth of nature, material and human. But he had entire acquaintance also with our old rounded Doric at its best, and he had a faultless ear for its melody and pith of phrase. Critics like Carlyle and Arnold may pause to put him as a poet in the first rank, but they are lost in admiration of his wondrous power of speech—such a master is he of the music of what he calls himself "our native manner and language."

What a picture, for instance, this is, in four little lines, of a summer Sunday morn :—

The rising sun owre Galston Muirs,  
Wi' glorious licht was glintin' ;  
The hares were hirplin' down the furs,  
The lav'rocks they were chantin'.

That is the morning scene. Now, listen to an evening one, and mark what a marvellous percentage of the words gives you the meaning in the very sound :—

When twilight did my grannie summon  
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman,  
Aft yont the dyke she's heard ye bummin'  
Wi' eerie drone ;  
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortrees comin'  
Wi' heavy groan.

And this easy mastery, of course, in the expression comes out especially in his matchless songs, where in addition he had the tunes to think of—those tunes which he crooned first of all into his head and heart. And then his familiarity with country life, his passion for the sights and sounds of earth, came also to his aid. He made the throbbings of the heart wake echoes in the world of sense. He transfigured human love with settings from the love of nature. And the staid and serious sweetness of his lilt as he sang the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the raptures and despairs of life, is varied by the most nimble handling of the airy and the arch. In pathos and in humour, which though unlike are as twins, he is equally at home. He takes us *volens volens* in his power, and runs us through the whole gamut of emotion, from grave to gay, from lively to severe. And all with this artless, this full-throated ease of style. Who, tell me, in the realm of song ever came so near as Burns did to the warbling of the bird upon the tree? No wonder the mellow mavis was his friend. Burns has been a fountain in the desert unto many. Wherever two or three in distant lands and lonely places have met together hearts have melted at his songs. Care, mad to see a man so happy, has lighted down behind the horsemen. A fountain! Ay, a fountain as of the Scottish hills, where grass is green and flowers are found, where the waters gush forth full and free, and the atmosphere is pure.

Through busiest street and lonely glen  
Are felt the flashes of his pen ;  
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when  
Bees fill their hives ;  
Deep in the general heart of men  
His power survives.

And then the man himself, how he comes out ever in his verses—so open and so honest, so loveable and self-revealed. The pious prudes complain about his passions—and oft, alas! they were disordered—but they forget that for a prince of song you could hardly have them weak. You must take your lyric poets as you get them, and be thankful. There is something far wrong with the heart which keeps harping on his sins. He loved much ; and the same, they should remember, is forgiven much. No doubt he had a relish for the coarse, and it was but little veiled ; but coarseness is relative to one's surroundings and one's age. Burns in origin was rustic and of low degree ; but withal he left the songs of Scotland ten times purer than he found them. Every peeping amateur astronomer can discover spots upon the sun ; yet, after all, the sun is riding high above him in the heavens. Burns's faults are but the ragged edges of his strength—his poems should be printed in that style. For my part, I am thankful for the same—they keep me from idolatry. Idealise, of course, his figure—and poets are a very tempting object ; then your idolatry is safe. That is what you do with saints and spiritual heroes ; and the people long ago have canonised their Burns. Let not the thought of that, however, remove him from the common world. We hail him as a human brother—one who helps us to the truest wealth of life. I read the "Jolly Beggars," and I feel at once the poor can soar above their poverty ; the human spirit can triumph over circumstance. Your genuine Macphersons can dance beneath the gallows. I listen to his philosophic dogs in dialogue, I hear him sing "A Man's a Man for a' that," and I bethink me of the essential teaching of Dives and Lazarus, or of the Rich Fool, because in all the four alike, I see the worldling shown up in the section ; with their help I pierce through the shows and counterfeits of life, and find riches in the spirit. I see that "pith o' sense" and "pride



o' worth" have, after all, the real claim to rank ; I recognise that

The honest man, tho' e'r sae poor,  
Is king o' men for a' that.

The world, as you know, often goes against us ; and existence for the moment seems emptied of its joy. But we can remember Robin, and his indomitable spirit, amid the scorn of many a sniffing Pharisee, or the lofty condescensions of the little great folk of Dumfries. His, still, was the upspringing buoyancy—

Werena' my heart light, I wad die.

He had his hours of sadness, for every high quality claims acquaintanceship with its opposite, but Burns was blythe about the heart. His gaiety, it was invincible, and is fine legacy for Scotland. Our world, and especially our Church, is full of false solemnity. Life for many worthy people is but a lengthened funeral, the gloomy portal of a paradise of ghosts. For all such Burns mixes badly with the Bible. They can sing Psalms, but not his songs. All the same to every heart of healthy nature he comes with brightness and with lightness inspiring to our midst. At his electric touch, the winter of our sadness becomes glorious with summer gladness all at once. The memory of Burns be blessed for this. He cleansed what a complacent piety deemed common and unclean. The Pharisees know not joy when they behold it. They are horrified to think it here by Nature. They would improve the unimproveable. They stifle what they fain would sanctify. They have a rough and ready patent—a refuse destructor ; but it doesn't work. Burns, in ways little recognised as yet, was a real reinforcement of religion. This lingering root, for instance, of savage superstitious fear, he helped greatly to extirpate. And in many ways he modified with human touch the hard outlines of the popular theology. No one ever came so near to chaffing the very head off the Deil. He reduced him, with mathematical precision, to a "point," which has position but no magnitude. We hardly recognise him now at "winnockbunker" and in "shape o' beast," because, like modern cattle, he is dishorned. But when he screws his pipes and "gars them skirl," we feel at

once familiar with the infernal noise, and cannot doubt the source of inspiration. Burns's satires on church matters were so telling, one wishes he were now alive. He might deal a valiant blow at the threatening revival of obscurantist priestcraft. His satires, of course, do not everywhere go down—that's the way with satire ; but they are living still, puissant to clear the air of cant. He was a bombshell for the bigots. One there was in Palestine of old, who was stern upon the prating pietists, but tender over lilies and over sparrows. So of Burns, and his battles with the unco guid. He smites them hip and thigh, yet never with excessive slaughter ; and then he melts in mercy for the wounded hare, the mountain daisy becomes immortal in his hands, the very heart goes out from him in pity for the "ourie cattle" that have to bide the blast. Saul also is among the prophets. Burns and Shelley, I believe, albeit outcasts of the creed-bound kirks, will yet take lofty rank among the teachers of their age—Burns in the lower, Shelley in the higher range. Look back across the centuries, and you can see that the religious search has been like the climbing of a hill. The natural men are on the one side, the supernatural upon the other. When they reach the top, there will be harmony ; in that heavenly air, they shall be one. The supernatural men, of course, are on the southern and the sunny side. But the great world surely wheels upon its axis, and vengeance sits sullen on her car. It rather looks as if the naturals are to have their innings and their honours now. Burns was on the northern slope. Clouds and darkness were around him, the winter wind blew shrill about his ears ; but he had insight, he had hope, he had the faith which craves a larger blessing for humanity. You say complacently, it was the French Revolution. True, O King ! but he was fired, he fought, for the grander revolution that shall come. With him it was the deepest passion to see the wrong righted, to see moral worth redeemed from poverty, to see benevolence and brotherhood triumphant—in a word, that regeneration of the body social which is, in sooth, the Kingdom of God. His one highest aspiration we must never tire of hearing in the well-known lines—



Man to man the world o'er  
Shall brithers be for a' that.

The real religious Burns is not to be found in extracts from the "Cottar's Saturday Night," or his versions from the Psalms. These are but his tribute to conventionality. You must go deeper. He was at feud with the formal orthodoxy of the heart—he responded eagerly to every cry of human need. Nay, he enfolds in his compassion the very birds of the air and the beasts of the field. The spirit almost died out of him for others. He was no stranger, at least in feeling and in instinct, to the one eternal principle of sacrifice. He touched sure and straight the secret of the highest life when there burst from him those tenderest lines, soft as the light that glistens in a human tear—

Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,  
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss.

Humanity with him was the touchstone of divinity. You quickly find affinity, when you trace the real Burns, with that gospel in the gospels, the 15th chapter of St. Luke. His was the breast that burned with sympathetic pity for the lowly lostness of his brothers. How he bowed beneath the burden of their woes! These things are the deep note in his song, "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Call him unconsciously Christian if you please—the pattern of the prophet's mantle is often somewhat strange. Conscious or unconscious, he is Christian all the same. Perhaps the Kirk itself—tell it not in Gath!—stood between him and the light. I come to town, and I admire your well-kept grounds. How radiant in your grey metropolis the flaunting flowers your gardens yield. The red geranium in its season blinds me with its blaze. But I forget not the pristine stock from which it sprang, its congener about the country parts. You must allow me to admire the wild geranium of the woods. That was Burns. He was the wild flower by the way. And ever by the wayside I behold him. With other poets, we dwellers in this northern land have ever and anon to run and read their works. But Burns was Scottish to the core, withal so cosmopolitan and human that the subjects of his poetry recur in daily life with all the pleasing glamour of personal associa-

tion. Burns for what he was, Burns for what he said and sung, sweeps day by day the harp strings of our memory. To every soul that can appreciate his power, the birds, the birks, the burnies, and the braes, are all eloquent of him. He rises like a pitying voice from the crushed experience of fellow-men. We see him in the woodland wild, in ilka green shaw. We hear him in the murmur of the stream—its waters never drumlie. The daisy as it decks the sward—a glittering eye among the grass; the rough bur-thistle spreading wide among the bearded bear:

The snawdrap and primrose our woodlands adorn,  
The violets bathed in the weat o' the morn.

The mouse that rustles in the hedge-row, our "poor earth-born companion and fellow mortal;" the "birring pairicks," and the "cootie muircocks," as they "crouselly crawl;" the lav'rock that springs "frae the dew's o' the lawn;"

The miry beasts retreating frae the plough;  
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose.

Or "Mailie and her lambs thegither;" the lass that's litling on the lea-rig, or by the "stookit raw;" the way-worn beggar with his faltering step, proclaiming "Man was made to mourn;" the cottar's home beneath the shelter of the aged tree; the "twa dogs," sporting with the "toddling wee things" as they "stacher through;" the bairns that rin about the braes or paidle in the burn; the auld guidman looking "frae him" on the knowe, as he delights to view

His sheep and kye thrive bonnie, O;

and the chiel, every whit as blythe, who

hauds his pleugh,

An' has nae care but Nannie, O.

All these—nature in her endless moods, man amid his thousand movements—bring Burns before us like his own "vision." He walks beside us, an inspiration and a friend—one in whom the hearts of many shall rejoice, and the downcast spirit shall revive. Society, we may be sure, is moving onwards to perfection. There shall be triumphs yet for Man as Man. And when the golden age for humanity appears, Burns will rank high among its bards. Men will honour then what you and I do honour here this night—the immortal memory of Burns.

## XL.—CURRENT PRICES FOR SOME BURNSIANA LITERATURE.

THE following list of books in which reference is made to Burns, his life, friends, etc., is taken from a catalogue (No. 42) of second-hand books issued last spring by Messrs. Thomson Brothers, 74 George Street, Edinburgh. It is worthy of preservation on account of its showing the prices obtainable for the books referred to in 1892.

AIKMAN (James), Poems, chiefly Lyrical, 12mo hf. cf., 1s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1816.  
Pages 94 to 104, Ode to the Memory of Burns.

AITCHISON (E.) *Pleasure Forest Day Tour*, and other Poems, 18mo, cloth 1s. 6d. Edin. 1845.

Pages 140-41, Lines on the National Festival held in honour of Burns.

Pages 148-49, Verses to the Memory of Burns.

Pages 150-52, Verses on seeing the Snuff-box which belonged to Burns.

ALEXANDER (William), Poems and Songs, 4to, cl., 3s. 6d. Paisley, 1881.  
Pages 58-61, Poem on Burns.

ANDERSON (George and Peter), *Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, 3rd edition, 12mo, cloth. Edinburgh, 1851.  
Pages 71-75, Land of Burns, Birthplace, Monument to at Doon, etc.

ANDERSON (Robert), *Poetical Works of*, with Life, 2 vols. 12mo, bds., Vol. I. only 1s. 6d. Carlisle, 1820.

Page 29, Author's Life, Account of his visiting Dumfries, Burns's Grave, and seeing Mrs. Burns.

ANDERSON (William), *The Scottish Nation*, portraits and engravings, 3 vols. roy. 8vo. full calf, gilt edges, fine copy, 30s.

Edinburgh, 1874.

Vol. I., pages 498-512, Sketch of the Life of Burns, with portrait.

ANNUAL Register of History, Politics, Literature, etc., first 25 vols. 8vo, hf. cf. and calf, nice set, 10s. London, 1780-1802.

Vol. VII., 1786, pages 279-80, Criticism on the first Kilmarnock Edition of Burns's Poems.

Vol. XIII., 1792, pages 221-23, Address to the Shade of Thomson, by Burns.

Vol. XXI., 1800, pages 31-52, Particulars of the Life of Robert Burns.

AULD Lang Syne, by Robert Burns, illustrated by George Harvey, R.S.A., 6 plates, folio, cloth, 3s. 6d. R.A.P.F.A.S., 1859.

BALFOUR (Alexander), *Contemplation*, with other Poems, 8vo, bds., 1s. 6d.

Edinburgh, 1820.

Pages 104-115, *Elegy to the Memory of Burns*.

BALLANTINE (James), *Chronicle of the Hundredth Birthday of Burns*, roy. 8vo, cloth, 5s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1859.

BALLANTINE (James), *The Gaberlunzie's Wallet*, 8vo, bds., 7s. 6d.

Edinburgh, 1842.

Pp. 123-24, Burns's Lodging in Johnnie Dowie's Tavern.

BALLANTINE (James), Poems, small 8vo, cloth, presentation copy, 4s. Edin., 1856.  
Pages 109-10, Lament for Burns.

BALLANTINE (James), *Lilias Lee*, and other Poems, 12mo, cloth, 2s. Edin., 1871.  
Pages 267-70, Ode for the Birthday of Burns.

BARBOUR (John Gordon), *Unique Traditions*, chiefly of the West of Scotland, sm. 8vo, cl. 3s. 6d. London, 1886.

Page 102, *The Rafter's Kirk Alloway*.

BISSETT (Jas.), Poems, Moral, Humorous, and Descriptive, 8vo. bds. rare, 2s. 6d. Cupar, 1824.

Pages 93-95, An Address or Song to the Memory of Burns.

BLACKIE's Popular Encyclopædia, 14 vols. roy. 8vo, cloth, 30s. London, N.D.  
Vol. II., page 909, Article on Burns.

BLACKLOCK (Dr. Thomas), Poems, with Memoir, 4to, bds., uncut, fine copy, 6s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1793.

Well known in connection with Burns.

BOOK of the Bishop Palace, Glasgow, square 18mo, bds. Glasgow, 1888.  
Description of various MS., etc. relating to Burns.

BRUCE (George, St. Andrews) *Destiny*, and Other Poems, plates, thick sm. 8vo., cloth, 3s. 6d. Printed for the Author, 1876.  
Pages 385-87, St. Andrews Burns's Club.

BURNS's Centenary: a Poem, read at the Celebration before the Lodge St. Stephen's, Edinburgh, 1859, 8vo, qr. cloth, with covers 1s. 9d. Edinburgh, 1859.

BURNS's Festival, in honour of our National Poet, Account of the Preparations, Essay on his Genius, Odes and Songs, etc., by

- Andrew Park, 18mo, qr. cloth, with covers, 3s. Glasgow, 1844.
- BURNS's Festival (The), in Charleston, S.C., 80 pages, 8vo, sewed, MS. Title, qr. cloth, 1s. 9d. 1858.
- BURNS's Festival (The), Prize Poem, recited at the Crystal Palace, 25th January, 1859, 4to., qr. cloth, with covers, 1s. 9d. London, 1859.
- BURNSIANA: a Collection of Articles from Chambers' Journal, Edinburgh Guardian, The Beacon, Moffat Register, The Bookman, etc., in 1 vol. folio, qr. cloth, 5s. 6d. 1832-91.
- BURNSIANA: a Collection of Articles, from Magazines, on the Skull of Burns; Reliques of Burns; Wordsworth and Burns; Horace, Burns, and Beranger; Some Aspects of Burns; A Burns Pilgrimage; and others, from Eclectic Review, Blackwood, Cornhill, etc., etc., 10 various, bound in 1 vol., with Title, 8vo, qr. calf, 7s. 6d. 1809-87.
- BURNSIANA Gleanings—A large and interesting Collection of Cuttings from Newspapers, Magazines, etc., mounted on special paper, with head-titles and title-pages, extending to three thick volumes, and illustrated with over 250 engravings, including fac-similes, portraits, views, funeral letter of the Widow of Burns, fac-simile of the writing on the Bible given to Highland Mary, etc., bound in 3 vols. thick 4to, full morocco, in case, very interesting lot, £16 10s.
- BURNS (Robert), Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, portrait after Nasmyth (not the original portrait), first Edinburgh edition, 8vo, hf. cf., scarce, 25s. Edinburgh, 1787.
- BURNS (Robert), Works of, with Life by Currie, portrait, 4 vols. 8vo, calf, one or two leaves at the beginning of Vol. I. stained at top, Currie's first edition, 10s. 6d. Liverpool, 1800.
- BURNS (Robert), The Poetical Works of, with Life and Glossary, portrait, engraved titles, and engravings, 2 vols. 18mo. London, S. A. Oddey, 1810.
- BURNS (Robert), Works, with Life, and Glossary, and Monody on the Death of Burns, by S. Kemble, Esq., 2 vols., 16mo, bds. 7s. 6d. London, W. Lewis & Co., 1816.
- BURNS (Robert), The Works of, with Letters to Clarinda, etc., with Life by Currie, portrait and engravings by Scott, etc., roy. 8vo, hf. cf., 5s. Glasgow, R. Griffin & Co., 1845.
- BURNS (Robert) The Complete works of, with Criticism on his Writings by Currie, Glossary, post 8vo, cloth 2s. Aberdeen, 1848.
- BURNS (Robert), The Songs of, with Music, Centenary edition, square 16mo. qr. cloth, 1s. 6d. Glasgow, David Jack, 1859.
- BURNS (Robert) Works of, edited by Robert Chambers, 4 vols. post 8vo. cloth, 6s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1851.
- BURNS (Robert), The Works of, with Life by Allan Cunningham, and Notes by numerous others, portrait and fac-similes, thick roy. 8vo, newly bound in hf. mor., gilt top, 9s. 6d. London, H. Bohn, 1862.
- BURNS (Robert), The Works of, with Essay by Prof. Wilson, contains his Correspondence, etc., fine portraits and views, 2 vols. in 1, roy. 8vo, hf. cf., 10s. London, Blackie & Son, 1865.
- BURNS (Robert), The Complete Works, with Notes, etc., by Allan Cunningham, fine plates, 2 vols. roy. 8vo, hf. mor., 11s. Edinburgh, T. Jack, N.D.
- BURNS—The Poems, Letters, and Land of Robert Burns, illustrated by Bartlett, Allom, and others, 2 vols. 4to, hf. cf., slightly used copy, 7s. 6d. Virtue, N.D.
- BURNS (Robert), Poetical Works of, Chronologically arranged, portrait, 3 vols. 12mo, cloth, neat copy, 5s. Edinburgh, Paterson, N.D.
- The Same, half calf, gilt top, uncut edges, in case, 10s. 6d.
- CAMPBELL (Thomas), Specimens of British Poets, with Critical Notices, thick 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d. Philadelphia, 1855.
- Pages 76-87, Selection from Burns, with Biographical and Critical Notice.
- CARLYLE (Thomas), Works of, People's Edition, 37 Vols. 12mo, brown cloth, 42s. London, 1874.
- Vol. VII., pages 1-53, Essay on Burns.



Vol. IX., page 93; Vol. X., page 222; Vol. XI., page 124, 150; Vol. XIII., page 173, 179; Vol. XIV., page 30, 75, 175, 243; Vol. XX., page 101, 167; Vol. XXIII., page 18.—References to Burns.

CARNEGIE (David), Lays and Lyrics from the Factory, 12mo, bds., 1s.

Aberdeen, 1879.

Page 84, Additional verses for "Auld Lang Syne," sent to the Dundee Burns' Festival.

CARRUTHERS (James), Poems by, 12mo, cloth, 1s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1839.

Pages 49-53, To the Memory of Burns.

CENTENARY of Burns, an Account of the Proceedings, Speeches, etc., with Memoir, portrait, 12mo, bds. 1s. 6d.

Edinburgh, 1859.

CHALMERS (Alexander), The General Biographical Dictionary, 33 vols. 8vo, bds., 20s. 1813.

Vol. VII., pages 400-404, Biographical Sketch.

CHALMERS (Margaret, of Lerwick, Shetland), Poems, 8vo, half calf, 7s. 6d.

Newcastle, 1813.

Pages 44-49, Verses in humble admiration of Burns.

CHAMBERS' Cyclopædia of English Literature, 2 vols. roy. 8vo, hf. cf., 14s. Edin., 1880.

Vol. II., pages 186-194, Sketch of Burns.

—Another copy, 2 vols., cl., 4s. 9d.

1843,

CHAMBERS' Eminent Scotsmen, new edition, by the Rev. T. Thomson, fine portraits, 5 vols. in 9 divisions, cloth 15s.

Edinburgh, 1855.

Vol I., pages 440-460, Sketch of the Life of Burns, with portrait.

—Another copy, 5 vols. roy. 8vo, half morocco, gilt tops, 32s.

CHAMBERS' Edinburgh Journal, from the beginning in 1832 to 1889, all half calf, but the last 3 vols. in Parts. 75 vols. roy. 8vo and folio, £8 7s. 6d.

Edinburgh, 1832-89.

Vol. I., 1833, pages 9-10, Burns' "Jolly Beggars."

" " " 100, 136, Anecdotes of Burns.

" " " 213, Real Fame of Burns.

Vol II., 1834, pages 9, 305, 321, Articles on the Land of Burns.

Vol. IV., 1836, page 265, Anecdote of Burns.

Vol. VI., 1838, page 345, An omitted Chapter in the Life of Burns.

Vol. VIII., 1840, pages 33, 40, 62, Heroines of Burns.

Vol. VIII., 1840, page 405, Anecdote of Burns.

Vol. IX., 1841, page 196, Politics of Burns.

Vol. X., 1842, page 37, Review of Prof. Wilson's Essay on Burns.

Vol. XI., 1843, page 328, Subscription for Burns's Sister.

Vol. XII., 1844, page 152, Notice of a French Translation.

Vol. XII., 1844, page 388, Review of Letters to Clarinda.

Vol. XIV., New Series, 1851, pages 1-4, A Heroine of Burns.

Vol. XVIII., 1853, pages 118-20, Visit to a Spot connected with Burns.

Vol. XVIII., 1853, page 175, Anecdote of Burns.

" " " pages 230-234, Review of Chambers' Edition of Burns."

Vol. XI., New Series, 1859, pages 128-129, The Burns Centenary.

Vol. XI., New Series, 1859, pages 161-163, Facts and Ideas about Burns.

Vol. XI., New Series, 1859, page 352, Burns's Pistols.

Vol. XII., 1860, pages 107-110, Burns's Centenary Poems.

Vol. for 1875, pages 193-196, Recent Discoveries regarding Burns.

CHAMBERS (Robert), Traditions of Edinburgh, 2 vols. 12mo, 1825; and History of Scotland, 2 vols., 1832, 4 vols., bound uniform, hf. mor., fine copy, 20s.

Vol. I., page 189; Vol. II. page 241, Short Notices of Burns.

CHAMBERS (Robert), Walks in Edinburgh, 18mo, 2nd edition, hf. cf., 9s.

Edinburgh, 1829.

Pages 78-80, Burns' Tavern, etc.

CHAMBERS (Robert), Minor Antiquities of Edinburgh, 18mo, bds., 10s. 6d.

Edinburgh, 1833.

Page 106, First Lodging of Burns in Edinburgh.

CHAMBERS (Robert), The Book of Days, plates, 2 vols. roy. 8vo. half calf, 17s. 6d.

Edinburgh, 1865.

Vol. I., pages 156-160, Sketch of Burns, with silhouette portrait by Miers.

CHAPMAN (Thomas), Contentment, and other Poems, 12mo, cloth, 1s. 6d. Kelso, 1883.

Pages 6-8, Poem on Burns.

CHRISTIE (W.), Traditional Ballad Airs, Arranged for the Pianoforte, 2 vols., 4to, half morocco, fine copy, 32s. 6d.

Edinburgh, 1876.

Vol. I., page 62, the parting of Burns and Highland Mary.

Vol. II., page 60, What can a Young Lassie?

CLARINDA—The Correspondence between Burns and Clarinda, edited by her Grandson, W. C. McLehose, portrait of Clarinda, 8vo, cl., 5s.

Edinburgh, 1843.



- COMBE, (George), System of Phrenology, plates, 5th edition, 2 vols. 8vo, cloth, 6s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1843.  
Vol. I., pages 153, 212, 263, 309, 380, 382, 390, 412, 458, references to Burns.
- CREECH (William), Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces, 8vo. bds., 5s. Edinburgh, 1815.  
Pages 23-31, Letter of Burns to Creech, with Poem of "Willie's Awa."
- CRITIQUE (A) on the Poems of Robert Burns. portrait and engravings, 8vo, bds. 5s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1812.
- CROMBIE (Benjamin W.), Modern Athenians, a Series of Portraits of Memorable Citizens of Edinburgh, drawn and etched by Crombie, 1837-47, 4to. Edinburgh, 1882.  
Pages 99-102, George Thomson and his connection with Burns, with Portrait.
- CUNNINGHAM (George G.) History of England, and the Lives of Englishmen, portraits, 8 vols. 8vo, cloth, 10s. London, 1850-52.  
Vol. VI. pages 223-24, Sketch of the Life of Burns.
- CUTHBERTSON (John), complete Glossary to the Poetry and Prose of Burns, crown 8vo, cl. 6s. Paisley, 1886.
- DOBIE (George), Poems, 12mo, cloth, 1s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1883.  
Pages 114-16, on Burns's Anniversary, 1863.
- DOUGALD (Neil, composer of the tune of "Kilmarnock," etc.), Poems and Songs, with Memoir, 12mo, cloth, 1s. 6d. Greenock, 1854.  
Pages 37-40, Elegy on Burns.
- DRUMMOND (P. R.), Perthshire in By-gone Days, small 8vo, hf. cf. London, 1879.  
Page 486, Neil Gow and Burns.  
Pages 526-38, Perthshire Songs by Burns.
- DUBLIN University Magazine, Vol. III., 8vo, hf. cf., 2s. Dublin, 1834.  
Pages 489-503, Burns and Crabbe.
- EDINBURGH Encyclopædia, Conducted by David Brewster, LL.D., 18 vols. 4to, full calf, fine copy, 21s. 1830.  
Vol. V., pages 145-48, Biographical Notice of Burns.
- EDINBURGH: Its Houses and Its Noted Inhabitants, chiefly 17th and 18th Centuries, Catalogue of Drawings, Engravings, etc., Selected by, from the Collection of W. F. Watson, 8vo, qr. cl., 3s. 6d. 1865.  
Describes numerous pictures relating to Burns, with interesting notes.
- ENCYCLOPÆDIA Britannica, 7th edition, 21 Vols., Vol. V., Part 2, 4to, cl., 2s. 6d. 1842.  
Pages, 740-44, Biographical Notice of Burns.
- FERGUSON (Rev. Fergus), Should Christians Commemorate the Birthday of Burns? thin 16mo, qr. cloth, 1s. 6d. Edin., 1869.
- FERGUSON (Robert), The Works of, with Memoir, etc., portrait, 12mo. bds., 2s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1805.  
Pages 10-11, Account of the erecting of a Monument to Ferguson by Burns.
- FINLAY (John), Wallace; or the Vale of Ellerslie, with other poems, 12mo, boards, 1s. 6d.. Glasgow, 1806.  
Dedicated to Mrs. Dunlop, of the House of Wallace, and the Friend of Burns.
- FORBES, (Peter, Dalkeith), Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, 12mo, boards, scarce, 3s. 6d. Edinburgh, 1812.  
Pages 3-8, To the Friends of Burns on reading the contents of Burns's Poems.  
Pages 58-59, Circular Letter sent to the Friends of Burns, inviting them to meet at the Author's House on the Anniversary of Burns's Birthday, 1811.  
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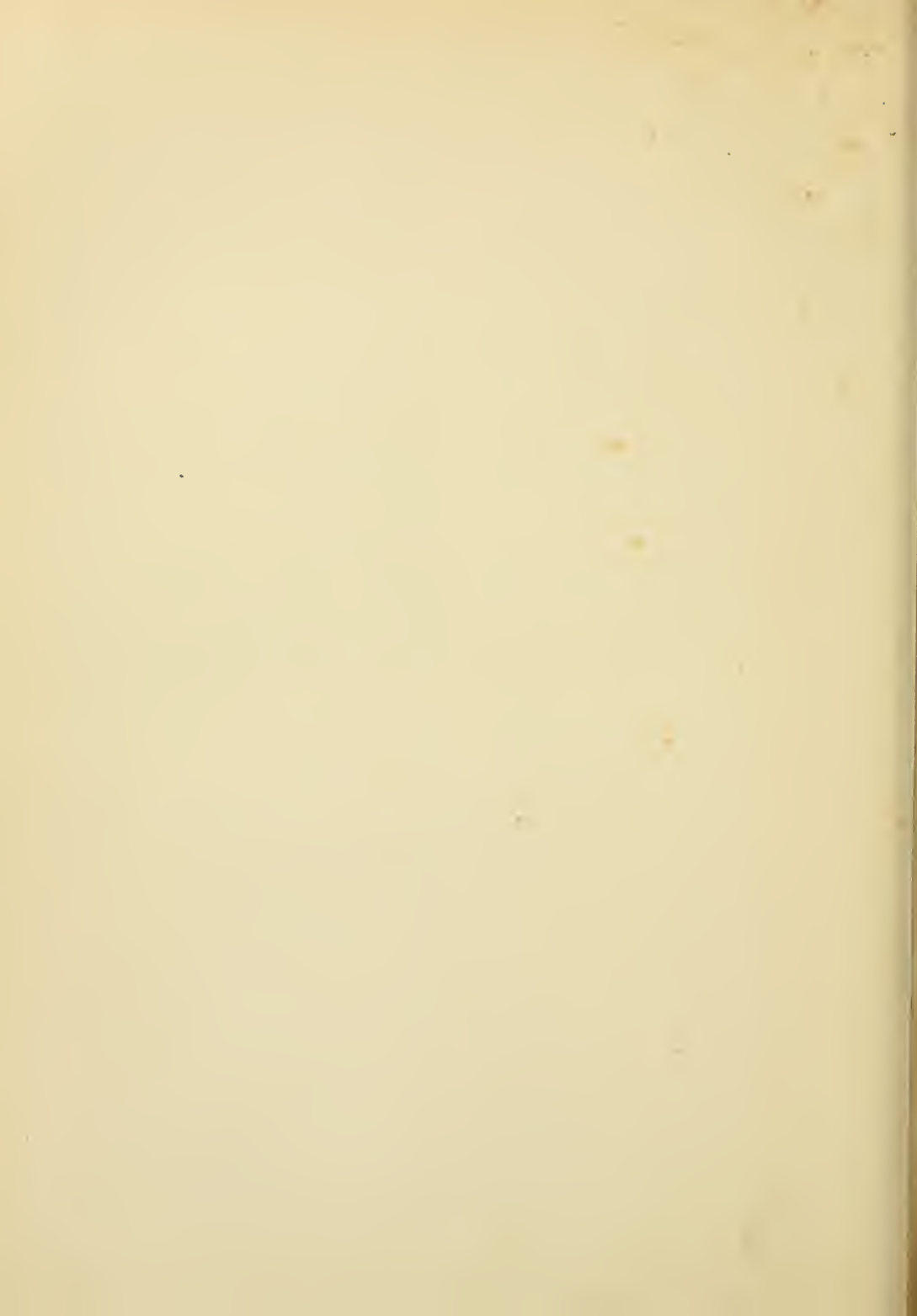
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Vol. VI.

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ALEXANDER GARDNER

Publisher to Her Majesty the Queen

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1897

“ Burns is by far the greatest poet that ever sprang from the bosom of the people, and lived and died in a humble condition. Indeed no country in the world but Scotland could have produced such a man ; and he will be for ever regarded as the glorious representative of the genius of his country. He was born a poet, if ever man was, and to his native genius alone is owing the perpetuity of his fame. For he manifestly had never deeply studied poetry as an art, nor reasoned much about its principles, nor looked abroad into the wide kin of intellect for objects and subjects on which to pour out his inspiration. The strings of his lyre sometimes yield their finest music to the sighs of remorse or repentance. Whatever, therefore, be the faults or defects of the poetry of Burns—and no doubt it has many—it has, beyond all that ever was written, this greatest of all merits—intense life-pervading and life-breathing truth.”—PROF. WILSON.

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# BURNSIANA.

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## I.—HON. JOHN W. GOFF ON BURNS.

*An Oration delivered before THE NEW YORK SCOTTISH SOCIETY, Jan. 25th, 1895.*

A MAVIS sang and Scotland listened. A song bird of nature flooded the land with melody and sent its limpid echoes by burn and brae, on crag and tarn. Wherever Scotsmen heard the joyful notes, they listened and were thrilled; and over the vast domains "where thousands laboured to support a haughty lordling's pride," the song of "Magna Charta" swelled in chorus.

For this song bird of nature was a bard of the people, sang of the people and for the people.

He made the human heart his harp, and he touched its thousand chords with such exquisite tenderness and skill as to make the dialect of a province the language of the universe, and in the words of a brother poet, his melodies "are the life-winged thistle-down that sows the emblem of Scottish truth, manhood and sentiment as far as it can fly on the winds of heaven."

This young Scottish farmer sprang from neither the highest nor the lowest grade in society; somewhat removed from the peasant, but keenly and bitterly aware of the tyranny of caste.

Burns was not a diamond found in a clod. He came from stock that knew the value of learning, and his lamp of genius was not untrimmed when the friction of life evoked its wonderful flame.

It was fortunate too that his education did not proceed so far as to overload his brain with other men's ideas, thoughts and designs, and to mar the grain of the rugged oak with too much veneering.

It is not meet to belittle the advantages of higher education, but it is at least question-

able whether superior genius is benefited by an encumbrance of book-learning, and whether the streams of originality, sparkling and pellucid, may not be lost in a river of classics.

The hot-house plant, cultivated with care and nurtured with luxury may represent striking contrasts of colour, and rare and curious forms of foliage; but it can never ascend above its crystal dome; while the hardy sapling on the wild woodland, kissed by sunbeams and strengthened by wintry blasts, revels in the freedom of mother nature, and reaches the grandeur of an emerald-crowned forest king. As the graduate of a university, Burns, no doubt would have been a learned pedagogue, or a master of the classics, or a preacher in the kirk, or a hair-splitting country attorney; but what conventional letters might have gained, humanity would have lost. In the case of Burns, genius was hampered only by his necessities, and while these necessities sometimes brought his muse down to an unworthy strain, they also served his highest efforts in behalf of the human race. As a boy, Burns had but scant opportunity for rest, recreation, or scholarly advancement. He hungered for knowledge from a child, yet "the cheerless gloom of the hermit with the increasing toil of a galley-slave," were his unhappy portion through all his early years.

On the farm at Lochlea, during meal times—the only moments of relaxation—he ate with a spoon in one hand and held a book in the other. He carried books in his pocket to study during spare moments in the fields; he pored over them, driving his cart or walking to labour; carefully noting the true, the



tender, the sublime ; he studied minutely and lovingly the old Scotch ballads, and by night in his cold little room, by day whilst whistling at the plough, he thought and fretted, he dreamed and repined. Whilst great ideas stirred his mind, he threshed his corn and slaened his turf.

Scotland has had other poets, before and since his time, and good ones too, singing sweet songs ; such as Ramsay, Fergusson, Motherwell and Cunningham sung them, but by comparison with him, they are only the coat of frieze beside the Royal Tartan. They could not sing as he sang, and so, when the shadows closed around him at the early age of 38 years, the sweetest voice that Scottish song had ever known was hushed for ever. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. The brave and elegant Sir Philip Sidney used to say that "reading of the old ballad of Chevy Chase, made his blood stir like the sound of a trumpet," and old Fletcher, a wise statesman and a soldier, "brave as the sword he wore," said that "if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

It is not in books that we find the directing power that unfolded the masterly genius of Burns. In his father's wise counsels, in the mother's tender training, in the quaint ballads of an old servant, in God's great created and unwritten book of nature must we look for the inspiration of his tender love, his profound sympathy, his mournful melancholy, his devotion to human liberty, to his fellow-man, to universal brotherhood. These qualities, no less than the magnificent scintillations of his genius, command our affection, our admiration and respect.

He was a comet in literature ; he has been called the Shakespeare of Scotland, and with justice. There is no name in her pantheon so loved and honoured. It is lisped in the cradle and sung at the fireside. Great men, it is said, are those who affect their age. He not only affected his own age, but also succeeding ages. Great men and great events are said to grow as they recede from us ; judged by this standard, and it is the true one, Burns was a very great man ; although not one hundred years in his grave, he has

had a score of biographies ; his poems have teemed from every press ; Beranger has quoted him in France, and Goethe in Germany. His fame grows with the years and gathers strength with age. And yet this great man lived in poverty and died in absolute want. There has scarcely ever been such a combination of misery and talent.

The pathos of his life is tearful and heart-rending ; the high aspirations of the plough-boy to be Scotland's bard, the sturdy contest of the peasant to escape from those twin jailors of the daring heart, low birth and iron fortune. He rose through his genius, he fell through his passions.

How sincerely simple was his aspiration ; to be Scotland's bard was the ambition of his life, the lode-star of his existence. "His dreams were of the muses and not of rising markets ; of golden locks rather than yellow corn," and he dreamed with the thoughts of a thinker and the delicacy of a poet.

Dejected and despairing, he was seated alone one night in the one retired room of the auld clay biggin', half mad, half fed, half sorket, as he himself describes, when his fancy evolved the Muse of Scotia in the form of a lovely female, who had come to crown his head with holly and to give assurance that his name on earth was to live forever. In glowing words, he has described the vision that entranced him on that fateful night :—

"All hail my own inspired bard."

To understand Burns, we must understand the age in which he lived ; all the good of feudalism had disappeared, but most of the evil remained. The relation between landlord and tenant was no longer one of personal attachment and loyalty, but of selfish greed on the one side, and helpless submission on the other. Scotland had lost her native Kings, but the Jacobite sentiment still lingered, for we should remember that Bonnie Prince Charlie died only eight years before, and though absent he was not forgotten.

Burns was a sincere Jacobite, his grandfather fought for the old Pretender and his father in '45, had wielded a claymore for his country's liberty. In those famous lines on the window at the Inn at Stirling, Burns voiced his feelings, and with many others, while he felt that the cause was lost, he felt

that it was just. The vanished hopes of Stuart restoration, the destruction of the old system of clans, and the changed relations of landlord and tenant had left Scotland prostrate but not pacified, and her people impatient in the grasp of the Hanoverian Sovereign, were scanning the horizon for signs of liberty's Northern Lights. The American revolution, and the French revolution made a deep impression on Scottish minds. That Burns was an admirer of the American republic, and of that greatest of Americans, George Washington, we have evidence in the fact that at a dinner party, when the health of Pitt was proposed, he offered "the health of George Washington, a better man." The French revolution received his hearty sympathy both in act and in verse. He sent a present of guns to the French Convention, and his song, "You are welcome to despots Dumourier," is a scathing arraignment of the Benedict Arnold of Republican France.

It is true Burns afterward wrote under pressure of circumstances, a song in which he pledged fidelity to the Royal representative of that "idiot race to honour lost;" but it is easy to understand his motive in this concession to the prejudices of those who could have deprived him of his means of living.

In the branding of Dumourier, his heart spoke; in praising King George, it was "the wife and weans." It was fortunate for humanity that Burns was a child of misfortune. His father died in ruin, and he died in poverty, but that ruin and poverty were fruitful soil for the flower of perennial bloom which sheds a fragrance all the more precious for the tears which watered its planting. Burns touched the heart of the multitude, because he continually felt the injustice and wrong he described. He seared the very forehead of privilege and caste with his burning and scarifying sarcasm, because he perceived and penetrated the hollow falsity of the aristocratic pretensions and the utter selfishness of the motives which animated the titled tyrants who throve on the industry of the untitled masses.

At times, undoubtedly, Burns was despondent, not as to his personal fortunes alone, but also as to the future of mankind.

His "Man was made to Mourn" is evidence of this. No lines more touching, more mournful or more disconsolate were ever penned by human hand. It presents problems not yet solved and of which the author saw no solution save in the common doom of mortality, the common refuge of the grave.

Other poems, however, bear competent evidence that Burns had a vision of that brighter future toward which men have made such marvellous advances since the Bard of Ayr voiced human aspirations with a power that will be felt until time is no more. But Burns fought his share of the battle for freedom bravely if not always hopefully, and while he recognized the strength of the bonds which held the multitude in serfdom, he concentrated all the forces of his intellect in the blows which he made at the titled drones of society.

He was not satisfied with pointing out the unworthiness of the great, he brought home and clinched the fact that morally the common people were the superiors of their oppressors, whose fortunes rested on seed they had not planted and crops they had not harvested. The lessons he taught sank deep into the popular breast, and animated the multitude as the songs of Tyrateus stirred the Spartans to struggle for independence. His influence upon the Scottish people in particular and mankind in general, cannot be overestimated; it exceeds beyond question, that of any other poet not excepting Shakespeare.

Burns's verse is part of our common thought, our common life; it inspires us unconsciously and impels us irresistibly toward a realization of the golden rule. Among the poets of the world, Burns stands unique and picturesque. From none of his great predecessors did he derive inspiration. The language of the great bards was to him almost a foreign tongue, and although sufficiently versed in English for ordinary writing, yet when inspired by the Muse, his loftiest and tenderest strain found fitting expression in the dialect of his Scottish home. Love, friendship, independence, patriotism, "these," says Wilson, "were the perpetual inspirers of his genius." There is no delusion, no affection, no exaggeration, no falsehood in the spirit of Burns's poetry.

He rejoices like an untamed enthusiast, and he weeps like a prostrate penitent. With a manly frame that made him the admired among men, he combined the womanly heart that brought tears to his eyes at the destruction of a daisy, and touched his heart with sorrow when his plough-share turned up a field mouse, which he thus addresses: "I am truly sorry man's dominion has broken nature's social union and justifies that ill opinion which makes thee startle, at me, thy poor earth born companion and fellow mortal."

Calling this little mouse the "wee sleekit, cowerin', timrous beastie," a fellow mortal, is one of the happiest and most finished phrases of his production. If we smile at it, it is a smile of tenderness and pity. The descriptive part is as admirable as the moral reflections are beautiful, and in the conclusion there is a deep melancholy, a sentiment of doubt and dread that rises to the sublime. In the same strain he sings of the mountain daisy, which was written on hearing of Highland Mary's death, and it is one of the saddest refrains that ever fell from his lips:—

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower."

It should not be forgotten, however, that while the passionate side of his nature may be considered too prominent for moral approval, yet to those passions are due some of his most touching and marvellous outpourings, such as "Highland Mary," and "Mary in Heaven," soul songs that are familiar in the home, on the journey, and on the camping ground, that solace the toiler at his fireside and the soldier in the field, songs never surpassed in pathos or in fame.

Take that sweet description of a happy home in the "Cottar's Saturday Night." In this beautiful idyl, Burns displayed his happiest inspiration and his richest and most copious diction. It is a glowing picture of genuine household happiness and devotion in the olden time, and in these stately, though simple measures, he has sanctified for ever the poor man's cot.

The toil of the week is at an end, and from their several avocations the labourer and his family have returned to their cosy ingle, and their clean hearthstone; the frugal repast is over, the cares of the week are laid

aside, preparations are made for the devotions of the morrow, and the family circle is formed for praise and prayer; with the solemn injunction, "Let us worship God," the father leads and with becoming reverence the happy wife and children join in praise and thanksgiving to the Father in Heaven for the blessings they enjoy.

The Cottar's closing lines are an invocation which links Heaven to earth, a *Te Deum* from Caledonia to Paradise:—

"O, Scotia, my own, my native soil,  
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,  
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil  
Be blessed with health and peace and sweet content.  
And O, may Heaven their simple lives prevent  
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile,  
And then, how e'er crowns and coronets be rent,  
A virtuous populace may rise the while,  
And stand a wall of fire round their much loved  
Isle."

If Burns was inspiring in his denunciation of what he viewed as hypocrisy in religion, some of his poems breath pure and profound religious sentiment. "A prayer in the prospect of death" is not surpassed in the English language, in the true spirit of humble enthusiasm and repentance, and dependence on the divine justice and mercy.

Some critics claimed that personal spite barbed the arrows of Burns' satire. True, his castigation was severe, but we are led to believe that hatred of hypocrisy was his impelling motive. He ridicules not the sacred but the sanctimonious. His shafts were hurled not at religion or religious observances, but at the pretensions of those whose harsh teachings and pharisaical observations were in his opinion repugnant to the gentle teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. He never lampooned religion; he simply ridiculed the whited sepulchres, whose words and works were making religion oppressive and odious.

If in this he erred, so did Milton, who puts blasphemy into the mouth of a fallen angel; so does Byron, who puts similar soliloquy into the mouth of Cain; so does Goethe, who, in his wonderful creation, brings Mephistopheles face to face with God; so does Holmes, who, describing a wicked minister in his "Guardian Angel," lashes with his satire, not a bad class of men, but a bad man of a class of men. Who will venture to



accuse these men of wilful blasphemy? On the contrary was not their aim to rebuke sin and hypocrisy, and out of the mouths of the blasphemers themselves to vindicate the words of God to man. So it was with Burns, the very faith of the people was in danger from the unhallowed abuses that had been allowed to overshadow the divine ordinance of religion, and in exposing those abuses, the poet performed a service for religion for which the world will see that due credit is given. "God knows," he says, "I am not the thing I should be, but twenty times I rather would be an atheist clean, than under gospel colours hid be just for a screen."

"Tam O'Shanter" displays greater and more varied powers than any of Burns's other productions, and is considered by competent critics to be his master-piece. In it the descriptive and ludicrous, the supernatural, the terrible, are skilfully combined with an originality and felicity rarely equalled. No description of this inimitable poem could do it justice. To be appreciated, it must be read in Burns's own felicitous phrases.

If Burns had no other claim to the gratitude of the human race than the one song he gave to the hand and heart of true friendship in "Auld Lang Syne," it would be sufficient to win for him immortality in the hearts of men.

In the regions of eternal snow, in the arid sands of Sahara, in the crowded city and on the tented field, in the effulgence of the rising sun, and in the golden arc of its setting, wherever men meet and the English language is spoken, wherever the human heart pulsates with kindness for its fellow, there wells from deepest emotion, the song of "Auld Lang Syne," to fill the cup of kindness and bless with orisons the name of Bobby Burns. Geographically Burns belonged to Scotland; ethnically he belonged to the human race. Yet, let it not be imagined that because the humanity of Burns was unbounded by any narrow horizon, he was the less devoted to his native land. Scotland never had a truer son. He loved his country with every fibre of his being; he was proud of Scotland's history, and proud that he was a Scotsman. We have all read how Burns upon crossing the Tweed over Coldstream Bridge, knelt down

on English soil and uttered from the depths of his soul that Miltonic appeal to Heaven:—

"O, Thou, who poured the patriotic tide."

It is a striking fact that so far as the history of Scotland is revived in the poems of Burns, he prefers to depict the bright and victorious side. He wrote the battle hymn of freedom in "Scots Wha Hae," based on Bruce's victory at Bannockburn, and he left it for Walter Scott to draw aside the veil of time from Flodden's fatal field, and for Campbell to immortalize gory Culloden.

Burns apparently did not care to dwell on his country's calamities, when those calamities were buried in the past. He chose rather to recall the more glorious episodes in Scottish annals, that Caledonia's Sons might be animated to new efforts in behalf of the rights for which their fathers had striven. The part which the genius of Burns had played in the rescue of his race from the servitude of a century ago, it would be hard to determine; but it would be probably no exaggeration to say that the Marseillaise, potent inspiration as it was in the successes of the French Revolution, would not compare in its influence for the emancipation of man with the lyrical strains of Robert Burns. The poems of Burns need no interpretation, they are the common language of the human heart.

Humanity's pace is quickening as the gloom of night is lifting, and we discern beyond the mountains of darkness the sunburst of a perfect day, and while we toast the memory of Robert Burns, we heartily and hopefully repeat with him:

"Then let us pray that come it may;  
As come it will for a' that,  
For a' that and a' that;  
That man to man the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that."

Like his native hills, his fame will defy the ravages of time, and stand as a beacon for the weary, the worn, the persecuted of earth. Not to Scotland alone, but to the world has he left a legacy of peace, contentment, brotherhood, and love.

For—

"His strains have nerved the feeble against oppression,  
Aroused in true men's hearts the scorn of wrong,  
Pointed the hopeless to man's sure protection,  
And taught the weak to suffer and be strong."



"Lessons like these the souls of men shall cherish,  
While through his heart the ardent life blood springs,  
One burning thought at least can never perish,  
An honest man's above the might of Kings.

"While noble souls shall glow with warm emotion,  
While woman loves and genius pants for fame,  
While truth and freedom claim man's deep devotion,  
True hearts shall throb responsive to Burns's name.

"Then weep not, Scotland, though thy minstrel  
slumbers,  
Still lives the spirit of his song sublime ;  
Still shall the music of his deathless numbers,  
Thrill in all hearts and vibrate through all time."

A vote of thanks was presented to the Orator.

## II.—BURNS AND BYRON.

IN a discourse like this such a contrast between characters only partially dissimilar, is not unnatural. Each was the most conspicuous figure and powerful personality in the literary world of his time. One was a Berseker among poets, and of wild Norse lineage, descended through generations of untamed, untameable blood. The other came, in a clay hut, of douce, honest Scottish folk, who thought of nothing but to fear God and honour the King. The father of Burns, if somewhat impracticable and unpliant, was an incarnation of industry, conscience, and intelligence, who groaned for the welfare of his children in the struggle between passion and principle, amid which one of them suffered defeat. A world-wide difference between William Burns and "Mad Jack Byron!" A world-wide difference, too, between Agnes Browne, with her warm maternal breast filled with the music by her unutterable, and Catherine Gordon, with her frequent tantrums of ungovernable anger, and white-lipped rages unbearably; yet not so dissimilar, in spiritual traits,—their remarkable sons, each one a birth of passion. One was the inheritor of a title and an estate, with the means and power of luxury, of travel, and learned companionship; the other had a legacy of toil and poverty, and in the day of his brightest fame was obliged to content himself without affluence, within the bounds of his rugged country, and, for the most part, with vulgar and inferior associates. But the rough garret at Mount Oliphant, with its deal desk, witnessed the birth and record of better songs than ever graced the stately halls of mouldering Newstead. One was born to the privileges of a class that the other envied for its very exclusiveness; and Byron though at the root a democrat, was

prouder of his rank than of his poetic distinction; yet often taught the trespassers upon him that he could spurn the fawning lovers of a lord. Yet the two were separated more by externals than essentials. Both are members of the Olympian aristocracy; and, if admitted to the sphere where Dante met Homer, Lucan, and the rest, must now be voluntary associates. They were alike in their frailties, passions, and transgressions, if not in their penitence and remorse. Both met obstructions in the current of true love and bemoaned the ill reward of their unhappy affections. Both suffered oppressions, alienations, and similar distresses. Byron's cry, under chastisement of the press,—*"I am the most unpopular man in England,"*—is not unlike the reply of Burns to the friend who urged him to join himself to the social pharisees of Dumfries who had passed him by,—*"Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now."* They were alike in their love of popular liberty, and in their passion for heroic life and song. Burns was a warrior in his soul, as was Byron, who sought to become one in fact, and who died after singing:

"Seek out—less often sought than found—  
A soldier's grave for thee the best ;  
Then look around, and choose thy ground,  
And take thy rest."

Both were joined with Scott in a love of things martial, and an impatience of "inglorious days;" while the passion of the Scottish poets for Scottish patriotism may well be matched with that of Byron for Greece and Italy. They were alike in their serious moods and in their flashes of hilarity; alike in their capacity for withering scorn, their contempt for sham, their longing for nature and the real, their inveterate determination against all pretences and hypocrisies,

Since Pope ceased, no such satirists have appeared in Britain; and "Holy Willie's Prayer" may be paired with "The Vision of Judgment," that incomparable parody. Both lived rapidly, tragically, brilliantly; both died early, though in his death one was lamented and the other execrated.

Byron is the foremost of British bards whose writings are a self-revelation. He ever gave us himself, yet himself in distortion. He seemed to cry to all the world: "Paint me as you will, your colours shall be no darker than mine." The Inca tore out the heart of the maiden stretched on the altar and held it up bleeding to the sun, with a prayer; but the noble poet plucked his own, and flung it at his contemners with an imprecation. It was impossible he should be hidden if he wrote at all. His grieved self-consciousness was the sole foundation he built upon; his woes and follies are reared into a commanding edifice, from which wild cries fall on the ears of the listener who pauses for the music. In this regard, Burns comes at a distance behind him,—midway, indeed, between him and a class altogether diverse. There are master-minds of pure unimpassioned ideas,—like Bacon. There are spirits whose passion is a working element, and yet they themselves are hidden. A single heart may be world enough for him who is a prisoner there; but *their* field is a universe. Many give us songful hints; some picture an age, a few transcend ordinary limits; one takes infinity for his province. Here is the supreme type of those who forget and lose themselves in seeking to comprehend mankind.

"Shakespeare! loveliest of souls,  
Peerless in radiance and joy,"—

of whom, because of this effulgence, we well-enough know,—a vast mirror-mind, wherein, with continual variety and wonderful verisimilitude, the sons and daughters of mankind may see themselves reflected;—yet never does the very self of the poet who wrought so pass before us there. How few the authentic glimpses we anywhere get of his personality! Legend and mystery involve and surround him, though his age is not antique. But Burns—whose life we seem to live over, and repeat in memory, as we do that of Byron, and whose story is not only

told by himself, but by so many others who saw and heard him—if he forgot not his own life, had a faculty to enter into and comprehend a different soul. He had the penetrative eye of the seer, and the sympathetic interpretive genius—the poet's richest endowment—in his degree, the same as did Shakespeare. The Master of Harold was scarcely endowed with this faculty in the most moderate degree—that of a Maturin or Knowles. Here we have his heroes as in a composite cluster,—Lara, Conrad, Selim, Hugo and the others—but the face of *one*—the grieving Apollo—looks out from all of them. Not so can we identify the Scottish Bard with the few unique types he has portrayed. We see in these, indeed, what Burns loves, admires, or revolts from, what he truly sees and accurately portrays, but not what Burns *is*. Again, he makes his outcry and utters himself abundantly: as from the heart of the Hebrew minstrel, we have what could not be suppressed, his altogether clamorous raptures and agonies, never in melo-drama, but in downright sincerity. Then in another regard he approaches Shakespeare, having in a far higher degree than Byron, and in common with Milton and Shelley, the gift of harmony, of liquid aerial song. Only the birds of heaven sing so, with such spontaneousness and sustained clearness. Byron is often like a choir-master who begins well but breaks in mid-song, and, failing to recover himself, falters to the close. Burns, on the contrary, is in this faculty so much at the pitch of power that, like Shelley's Skylark, his lay becomes more rapt, intense and magical the deeper he pierces the empyrean; then, like the lark, he comes down among the grasses to find his nest.

Byron has spoken of Burns, not as at first one might suppose, but as one would instantly expect, remembering the noble poet's instinct to see and portray himself everywhere: "Allen," he writes in 1813, "has lent me a quantity of Burns's unpublished letters. . . What an antithetical mind?—tenderness, roughness—delicacy, coarseness—sentiment, sensuality—soaring and grovelling—dirt and deity—all mixed up in one compound of inspired clay!" True! but not truer of him concerning whom these words were spoken

than when applied to him who spoke them. For him—the later master—the pendulum of character and destiny swung to equal extremes. He, too, gave us the loathly and the lovely. Under the roses of his tropical temperament there were not only the crawling snail and worm, but the deadly fer-de-lance, whose movement is swift, whose bite is agony and death.

Yet, intrinsically, we hold and believe Burns to be the superior, and especially in moral respects. There is no such recoil and repentance to be found in the strains of Byron as in those of Burns. Byron spoke the language of fatalism, as of one who was conscious of being "more sinned against than sinning;" Burns, in the agony of an

awakened conscience, compared himself with Judas, and uttered in verse what has been properly called "The Publican's Prayer in Paraphrase." Burns's utterances are seldom insincere; Byron's are often so. Both were wanting in self-control; but Byron can oftener be convicted of wantonness than Burns. Burns has never reviled any worthy character, nor did he ever seek to inculcate vice, or to bring the religion of Christendom into contempt. Byron, alas! has done this; so that Prof. Nichol must admit, in his life of the poet, "Burns was, beneath his disgust at Holy Fairs and Willies, sincerely reverential; much of *Don Juan* would have seemed to him 'an atheist's laugh,'—and—a more certain superiority—he was absolutely frank."

### III.—BURNS' RELICS IN BROOKLYN.

*Valuable Manuscripts of Scott and Others—The Home of Wallace Bruce.*

BY JOHN D. ROSS.

FROM "THE BROOKLYN DAILY TIMES," APRIL 13, 1895.

THERE are certain notable incidents or events that occur in each of our lives and which become indelibly stamped on the memory for all time. These incidents may be of no importance whatever to even our dearest friends, but to ourselves they possess a peculiar fascination and we love to brood over them and to realize with the poet that "Time but the impression deeper makes."

An incident of this kind occurred to me a few evenings ago, when I visited the house in Stuyvesant avenue of our distinguished townsman, the Hon. Wallace Bruce, late United States consul to Edinburgh, that famous city immortalized by Fergusson and Burns and Scott, and a legion of other celebrities in poetry and song. It was not the fact, however, that this gentleman had so recently trod the streets and explored the historical scenes and houses of Auld Reekie that made my visit to his home so remarkable an event to me. Far from it. It was the man himself, his surroundings, his books, manuscripts, relics, and other valuable literary curiosities, gathered together from various sources and which, if once destroyed, could never be replaced or duplicated.

In almost every nook and corner of his large and elegant home, there was something that had a special history attached to it, the recital of which proved exceedingly interesting to me. Here on a table stood the handsome solid silver loving cup, presented to him by the honourable, the Lord Provost and magistrates of Edinburgh, in appreciation of his services in the cause of Scottish literature. In another corner stood a well-executed statuette of the distinguished gentleman in the act of delivering his poem "The Auld Brig's Welcome," at the unveiling of the Burns Statue at Ayr in 1891; there again lay a large thick quarto Bible, a King James edition of 1613, but still in an excellent state of preservation; while in another corner stood a large well-filled book-case containing first editions of Scott, Irving and others, besides rare and costly editions of Shakespeare, and various other valuable antiques, sufficient to make the eyes of the greatest bibliomaniac in the city beam with delight.

But all these treasures were comparatively insignificant as compared to those which I was yet to behold in Mr. Bruce's library. For Mr. Bruce holds high rank among the



authors and poets of to-day, and like all authors of note he is the happy possessor of a large and comfortable library. This is his sanctum—his workshop—if you will, and here it is that his favourite treasures are to be found. His books, papers, etc., are kept in excellent order (thanks to the taste and industry of his esteemed wife and daughter) and ready to be referred to at a moment's notice. As far as his own works are concerned, they are many and they have brought him a handsome recompense, and what is still dearer to an author, well-merited fame. In his library, then, I expected to be shown great things, and yet, I was more than surprised when he took from a cabinet a small piece of dark wood imbedded in a small square block, and placing it gently in my hand said: "Mr. Ross you are now looking upon and touching a small piece of the bed upon which Robert Burns died!" Truly, a thrill of veneration passed over me as I gazed on the little object for a few moments, and then carefully returned it to its worthy owner. As it was being tenderly restored to its resting place the last sad scene in the life of the great bard seemed to flash before my mind. My readers no doubt recall it. The return from Brow with the stamp of death upon his features—the anxiety of the people of Dumfries as they gathered on the streets in little crowds and spoke in whispers of the man whose genius they were only beginning to appreciate. The last sad letter addressed to his father-in-law, with the pathetic appeal: "Do, for heaven's sake send Mrs. Armour here immediately." The children taking the last look of their illustrious

father; the sinking of the mind into delirium, the execration against the legal agent who had sent him the dunning letter, and then as Carlyle so beautifully expresses it, "he passed not softly, but speedily into that still country where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach and the heaviest laden wayfarer at length lays down his load."

"And now," said Mr. Bruce, "let me show you the clear, bold handwriting of Burns himself," and he laid before me a manuscript copy of "The Blue-eyed Lassie." "There were several forgeries of Burns's MSS. in Edinburgh," he continued, "but experts told me if this was not genuine it was the finest piece of work ever executed."

#### THE BLUE-EYED LASSIE.

(She was the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Jeffrey, of Lochmaben, under whose roof beams Burns slept one night in the December of 1789. Upon the following morning the poet handed these lines to Miss Jeffrey when they met again at breakfast. The lady afterwards married a Mr. Renwick, of Liverpool).

I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen,  
A gate, I fear, I'll dearly rue;  
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,  
Twa lovely een o' bonnie blue.  
'T was not her golden ringlets bright,  
She charmed my soul—I wist na how;  
Her heaving bosom, lily—white—  
It was her een sae bonnie blue.

She talked, she smiled, my heart she wiled;  
She charmed my soul—I wist na how;  
And aye the stound, the deadly wound,  
Cam frae her een sae bonnie blue.  
But spare to speak, and spare to speed;  
She'll aiblins listen to my vow;  
Should she refuse, I'll lay my head  
To her twa een sae bonnie blue.

#### IV.—FOR THE MEETING OF THE BURNS CLUB, 1856.

By OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

THE mountains glitter in the snow  
A thousand leagues asunder;  
Yet here, amid the banquet's glow,  
I hear their voice of thunder;  
Each giant's ice-bound goblet clinks;  
A flowing stream is summoned;  
Wachusett to Ben Nevis drinks,  
Monadnock to Ben Lomond.

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Though years have clipped the eagle's plume  
That crowned the chieftain's bonnet,  
The sun still sees the heather bloom,  
The silver mists lie on it;  
With tartan kilt and philibeg,  
What stride was ever bolder  
Than his who showed the naked leg  
Beneath the plaided shoulder?

ix. "Her life like roses water"



The echoes sleep on Cheviot's hills,  
 That heard the bugles blowing  
 When down their sides the crimson rills  
 With mingled blood were flowing ;  
 The hunts where gallant hearts were game,  
 The slashing on the Border,  
 The raid that swooped with sword and flame,  
 Give place to "law and order."

Not while the rocking steeples reel  
 With midnight tocsins ringing,  
 Not while the crashing war-notes peal,  
 God sets his poets singing ;  
 The bird is silent in the night,  
 Or shrieks a cry of warning  
 While fluttering round the beacon-light,—  
 But hear him greet the morning !

The lark of Scotia's morning sky !  
 Whose voice may sing his praises ?  
 With Heaven's own sunlight in his eye,  
 He walked among the daisies,

Till through the crowd of fortune's wrong  
 He soared to fields of glory ;  
 But left his land her sweetest song,  
 And earth her saddest story.

'Tis not the forts the builder piles  
 That chain the earth together ;  
 The wedded crowns, the sister isles,  
 Would laugh at such a tether ;  
 The kindling thought, the throbbing words,  
 That set the pulses beating,  
 Are stronger than the myriad swords  
 Of mighty armies meeting.

Thus, while within the banquet glows,  
 Without, the wild winds whistle,  
 We drink a triple health,—the Rose,  
 The Shamrock and the Thistle !  
 Their blended hues shall never fade  
 Till War has hushed his cannon,—  
 Close-twined as ocean currents braid  
 The Thames, the Clyde, the Shannon !

#### V.—ROBERT BURNS, POET-LAUREATE OF LODGE CANONGATE KILWINNING.

*An Address delivered before the Members of the Lodge, January 31, 1893.*

BY HON. WALLACE BRUCE.

(Reprinted from "Here's a Hand.")

FOUR years have gone by pleasantly since I have been a resident in this fair city, and for four years I have come up with you in this room, hallowed by so many associations, to unite with friends and brethren in worship of the great poet of Scotland and the great poet of humanity—Robert Burns. Most auspiciously the Atlantic winds and the steam-power of the nineteenth century—which some say Robert Burns saw inaugurated in Scotland by Miller on Dalswinton Loch—brought to Edinburgh this morning a beautiful portrait, reproduced from Nasmyth's painting of the peasant poet, the lad who was born in Kyle. As a member of Canongate Kilwinning, and as a citizen of that republic where the donor of the picture, Colonel Laing—"the bare-footed Canongate laddie"—has attained "gear" and reputation, I am proud to be with you, and to see another link clasped across the ocean between these two great English-speaking nations ; and all because

Robert Burns was born in a little cottage in Ayrshire in 1759. I come before you to-night, not with carefully prepared oration, but rather to gather inspiration from this spot, which holds in enduring framework your national poet—from his songs, which have gone all over the wide world,—and from that noble utterance of brotherhood, just rendered so sweetly, so powerfully, and so dramatically—

"A man's a man for a' that."

Only a few days ago I saw a brother Mason in Kilmarnock, Mr. David Sneddon, a true lover of Burns, an honour to masonry, and well known to the Grand Lodge of Scotland. I stood with him on the tower of that wonderful monument to Robert Burns, and he pointed out to me the relative location of Mossgiel, of Mauchline, of Tarbolton, of Ayr, and of the lovely land associated with the memory of the poet, and standing there I thought of the broader outlook which

reached wider and farther than any horizon ; for from that poetic view-point I could see New York, and San Francisco, and Calcutta ; and all because Robert Burns in 1786 published at Kilmarnock the first edition of his poems.

One week ago, the evening of the 25th of this month, I had the pleasure of sitting down with one hundred lovers of Burns in "good old Killie," and when the train came at 10.12 I found myself *en route* to Ayr, and there, with another band of loyal worshippers, put in the rest of the evening at the shrine of the great bard. I spoke to them of the reasons why Burns was loved everywhere. One of the reasons I gave that night was because Burns was Scotland in portable form. A man could put his works in his vest-pocket, and carry Scotland with him throughout the world. Not that it was a lineal map, or a piece of accurate topography, but because sweet Afton, and the Doon, the Ayr, and the Nith had been illuminated by his genius, and men and women walked along their banks. I said also because Scotsmen are everywhere, and wherever there is a Scotsman he has Robert Burns close to his heart,—and it only takes one Scotsman in a community to leaven the whole mass. I was once told in Camden, New York, that four hundred men sat down to an annual dinner on the 25th January, and not one of them was born in Scotland. It came about because, in the preceding generation, a good old Dr. Fraser from some part of Scotland settled among them, and read to them the poems of Robert Burns.

You will remember seeing here last year Mr. McLean from Janesville, Wisconsin, who told us of swimming across the Tweed at Abbotsford when Washington Irving was a guest of Walter Scott. He said to me, on my visit to America last fall, that hundreds of men sat down annually on the 25th January in that Wisconsin town to worship the memory of Robert Burns. I am proud today of my countrymen, when I feel how sincerely they appreciate the truth and worth of the great poet of humanity.

Burns not only wrote for Scotsmen, but for liberty-loving men everywhere. If ever a man loved with a true Scottish heart, it was

Robert Burns ; if any man ever loved with a true British heart, it was Robert Burns. But there was something in that man, as there is in every great genius, not to be confined to one spot or one nation. I remember that Henry Ward Beecher once said to a gathering of three thousand people in New York, that Robert Burns was born to the whole world. He only chanced to come by way of Scotland.

We love Burns for the universal element in his nature. He has touched every chord, sounded every emotion, and responded in his own being to every throb of humanity. He came, he lived, he suffered. In a greater degree he enjoyed life than many of us ; in a deeper and more intense degree he suffered than any of us ever can suffer. His heart was attuned to the universal truths not only of humanity but the truths of that greater sphere which speaks of God as the Creator of honesty and of every principle of rectitude. In burning lines he has vigorously expressed how much he suffered on every occasion of his breaking the rules of life.

Burns is universally revered because he was honest, and appreciated the dignity of manhood. He felt the throbs of liberty, and was the outcome of a generation that sighed for liberty, that longed for it, until the shackles broke, and Great Britain stood free and enfranchised before the world. Now and again men speak of Cowper as the poet that rejuvenated mankind. What was Cowper to Robert Burns ? Burns, humble as he was, born in that little cottage, reared in poverty, with associates humble as himself, was the poet of humanity, the man through whom God spoke with clarion voice to people lying in darkness—the morning star of the new day, prophet of the dawn in which we are now living.

I like to think of him after the publication of that edition which startled all Scotland. I like to think of him as he went up to Kilmarnock and wanted a second edition, which the publisher was afraid to take in hand ; and then as he met with Dugald Stewart, and received a letter of encouragement and hope from Dr. Blacklock. For a few years I see him living on the banks of the Doon and the Ayr ; at Mount Oliphant and Lochlea ; a

few years longer at Mossgiel, with poverty still following him.

"He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',  
But aye a heart aboon them a';"

rings cheerily across the field as he ploughs up the mouse and the daisy, and finds in their humbly tragic fate the great universal lot of humanity. I see him again at Mauchline and at Tarbolton, at a masonic gathering, with his immortal "farewell" sung in gatherings like this all round the world.

I next see him preparing for the West Indies, but am thankful that he never rode with broken heart the billows of the Atlantic; for he had work to do here, and songs to sing that were to go on longer voyages. He comes to Edinburgh and finds his home with an Ayrshire man, at No. 1 Baxter's Close, Lawnmarket. It is to be noticed that Burns's homes, like his songs, were humble; but in Edinburgh he found ready associates with the great, the witty, the good, and the noble. I picture him in St. Andrew's Lodge, as his health is proposed, in an unexpected toast, "Caledonia's Bard, Robert Burns." He says in a letter that he rose to his feet and replied as well as he could, and was delighted when he sat down to hear a word of praise pass along the table. I see him, about two weeks afterwards, here in Lodge Canongate Kilwinning. I find him surrounded by the best known scholars of Edinburgh. I read the brief minute upon the books of that meeting: "The Right Worshipful Master having observed that Brother Burns was at present in the Lodge, who is well known as a great poetic writer, and for a late publication of his works, which have been universally commended, and submitted that he should be assumed a member of this Lodge, which was unanimously agreed to, and he was assumed accordingly." That minute went upon the lodge-book, and it is preserved to-day in Lodge Canongate Kilwinning among her choicest treasures. There is no minute in the St. Andrew's lodge-books that Robert Burns ever passed the door of that Lodge, and his visit there would have gone for ever from the memory of man if Burns had not happened to refer to it in a letter to a friend. The lodge-books of those days were very imperfectly kept. I have observed that some

of the minutes of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning during these years were not even signed. In fact, the April meeting of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning in 1787 is not minuted at all. But here is that prized and honoured minute, making Burns an affiliated member of this Lodge.

There is a picture on the walls of this room representing Burns crowned as Poet-Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning. That picture hangs perhaps in every State of the Union. It hangs to-day in every shire of Scotland, produced and reproduced in various forms and different sizes. Yet it is said by some very worthy men that this installation of Robert Burns as Poet-Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning never took place—that the event portrayed in the picture of Brother Watson, painted in 1845, had no existence. Let us look at the picture itself. Neither you, nor I, nor any other person supposes that this picture is a photograph or an exact reproduction of that scene in this Lodge. We all have seen the picture of Wellington and his staff-officers. Does any man believe for a moment that Wellington was ever surrounded by his staff-officers as shown in that picture? We all have seen the picture of Shakespeare and his friends. These pictures are not presumed to be strictly accurate in depicting what actually took place, but for that reason are we not to believe that there was a battle of Waterloo, and that Wellington and his troops stood that day as a wall of fire around Saxon institutions and liberty, and held the line against Napoleon's cavalry? Are we to be told that Shakespeare did not live in London at the time of Ben Jonson and the worthy poets of that generation?

Let us stop for a moment and calmly consider. Friends may differ. Some may think that this ceremony never took place. We are, nevertheless, friends. If one person puts together, by the law of deduction, a certain lot of premisses, and finds a particular result in his own mind, I am none the less a friend of that individual because I find, after the same reasoning, a logical deduction that leads me to think otherwise. Proof is to be found in tradition and in actual evidence. There is much in tradition, and many of the inci-



dents in Burns's life are known only by tradition. What is tradition? It is when one generation passes on to another an idea or statement which is known and accepted as true.

I was once at the sweet and beautiful home of the nieces of Robert Burns, the Misses Begg. They told me that when Burns came home from working in the field he would take a half-hour and go up to a little room that had a little pine table, and upon that table he would write the poems that he had ploughed up in the field; and the nieces told me that their mother could hardly wait till the dinner was over, and Burns back to his work, before she, his youngest sister, ran up to that room and literally devoured those poems. Am I to believe or disbelieve that? It was not written in a book, but was told me, ninety years after the production of "The Daisy" and "The Twa Dogs," by the daughter of the youngest sister of Robert Burns, and I believe it.

Long years after "The Cotter's Saturday Night" was written, Gilbert Burns said that one Sunday afternoon, while walking across the fields, his brother Robert recited to him that wonderful poem, and he spoke of the emotion that thrilled him. When I am told of that, am I to doubt it? There is something in the Scriptures about holding fast to the old traditions and keeping secure the old landmarks.

I remember, when I was initiated in Lodge No. 7, in Hudson, New York, they told me that Brand, the half-breed Indian, had once sat in that Lodge. It was a hundred and thirty years before I was made a Mason, and it is twenty-six years since this fact which I am going to tell you was made known to me. It was never on record. It was told me that once in a massacre, when a man was tied to a tree and the fagots piled about him, and the flames were beginning to mount and crackle, that man, thinking no one was present—nothing but the all-seeing eye of God—remembered the hailing sign of distress. In that vast wilderness, he made the sign. Brand, the half-breed Indian, who had been made a Mason in Canada, rushed into the flames and cut his prisoner free, because he was a brother Mason. Am I to believe that

tradition? When my sons join that Lodge, will I not tell it to them? Years may pass before I take them by the hand as brother Masons; but the first thing I will tell them will be that Brand once sat there. And when speaking of my connection with Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, I will tell them that the great poet Robert Burns sat in this Lodge, and was made her Poet-Laureate; that I received it from brethren who voiced the fact from those who knew him, and within these walls took him by the hand.

I remember the time when I received honorary affiliation here, four years ago. It was a proud hour of my life to come up to this Lodge, with its old associations, and the first thing told me was that there, in that Poet's Corner, Robert Burns was made Poet-Laureate.

But tradition is not all. We are living only in the second or third generation from that day. There are men still living who took the hands of those who knew Robert Burns. I do not care whether it is the second or third generation; tradition in a great family is bound to be true. Half of the history of the noble families of Scotland is to-day unwritten; but the transmitted tradition of those families is truer than much of the history that has been put upon paper. A man in a quiet chamber, with curtains drawn, may make characters that resemble the poet's writing, and may pile up documents by the "cord," which experts declare to be spurious. Tradition may exaggerate; but always in the very core of tradition there is the nugget of truth.

I speak to some who have only recently joined this Lodge, and desire to speak plainly and freely, that they may not be disturbed by floating sentences that come from outside sources, but examine for themselves straightforward evidence and the vouchers we have of Burns as Poet-Laureate of this Lodge. We do not rest our claims upon tradition alone. We have vouchers of the fact, and vouchers that would be accepted as evidence in any court of law in the world. There is such a thing as written testimony that cannot be disputed.

I wish to say to the younger members of the Lodge that although in 1787 there was



nothing put in that brief minute about Robert Burns having been made Poet-Laureate of this Lodge, yet twenty-eight years afterwards, while many men who knew of the event were still living,—I do not stop to account for it, whether it was due to the meagreness or the slovenliness of the minutes,—but twenty-eight years afterwards—only eighteen and a half years after the poet's death—when everybody had Burns blazed upon him as the genius of Scotland, in the year 1815, when it was proposed that a mausoleum should be erected over the poet's grave in Dumfries, this grand old Lodge put upon record that it would give twenty guineas towards that Mausoleum, *because Burns was the Poet-Laureate of Canongate Kilwinning*. And, as if to make the link secure, the brother who seconded that motion in committee was Mr. Charles Moore, the very man who signed the minute as Depute-Master of Burns's affiliation in this Lodge in 1787, and, therefore, was bound to know whether he had been made Poet-Laureate or not.

Am I to be told that this Lodge, with its Christopher North, and its members known throughout the world, would try to make out that Robert Burns was Poet-Laureate of this Lodge if he were not? If you do not know Scotsmen, I do, and when they subscribe they are pretty sure to know what they are subscribing to.

Take a parallel instance. There was another doubter, a person by the name of Ignatius Donnelly, who made a trip to Stratford-on-Avon. He went fortified with a book of 960 pages under his arm to prove to the good people of Stratford that Shakespeare was not a poet at all,—that Lord Bacon had written the plays of Shakespeare. There is not a book so thick or a volume so thin that can take the place in this Lodge of the immortal memory of Robert Burns as our Poet-Laureate.

What other witnesses have we? I summon Henry Mackenzie—to whom Walter Scott dedicated his "*Waverley*"—the author of "*The Man of Feeling*," who died in 1831, who wrote the first warm-hearted expression of regard for Burns, and placed the first literary crown on his head. I summon Henry Erskine, the great wit of Scotland,

who was a member of this Lodge, who lived until 1817 and knew Robert Burns, and ask if he would not know in 1815 whether Burns had been Poet-Laureate here? I summon Alexander Nasmyth, the celebrated painter and friend of Burns, who lived until 1831; Baron Norton,—made a brother the very night, February 1, 1787, when Burns was affiliated,—who lived until 1820; William Petrie, who knew the poet in 1787, and lived until 1845, thus connecting the year Burns was made Poet-Laureate with the very year the picture was produced; Robert Ainslie, who made the tour of the Borders with Burns, and lived until 1838, thereby connecting the Poet of Ayr with the Ettrick Shepherd, who was made Poet-Laureate in 1835; Louis Cauvin, the great teacher, with whom Burns studied French in Edinburgh, who was made a Mason in 1778, and lived until 1825. I summon Lord Kenmore, who spans the years between Burns and Hogg, who was made a Mason in 1786, and lived till 1840. Will any one say that these men—all brethren of Lodge Cannongate Kilwinning—would not know in 1815 whether Burns was Poet-Laureate here? and does any man think that these men, whose very names suggest that old-time honour of Edmund Burke, which "felt a stain like a wound," would have fabricated and perpetuated a falsehood? Is it not more probable that these men, who saw with their own eyes, should know whether Burns was Poet-Laureate here, or self-appointed critics of second sight, living one hundred years after the poet's death?

There was a man by the name of Campbell, who forms a connecting-link between Robert Burns and this picture, the man who seconded the motion in 1845 to have this picture painted. This man says that some of his happiest days were spent with Burns at Ochtertyre Castle. It has been pointed out that he would only have been eleven years of age at that time. I have not examined the record, and cannot say; but this I will say, that if any boy eleven years of age had met Burns, and did not remember it to tell his friends and descendants, he had better never have been born.

I will take a leaf out of my own book. I

met Horace Greeley, the great editor of a New York paper, when a lad. I followed him for two days, willing to touch even the hem of his garment, and to shake his hand. When I was ten years of age, there came a man to our town to give a series of poetic lectures—John G. Saxe. I remember the very seat in the village church where I sat those nights. When I was ten years of age, I met John B. Gough. When eleven years old, I was fishing with a crooked pin in a little stream near Troy, New York. A man passed by, of stately mien, and talked with me, afterwards President Garfield of the United States. These are things a boy can never forget. So much for reminiscence; and we can readily see how Brother Campbell cherished the memory.

On January 16, 1835, another minute appears in the books of this Lodge, to the effect that "It was expedient that the Honorary Office of Poet-Laureate of the Lodge, which had been in abeyance since the death of the immortal Brother Robert Burns, should be revived, and that James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, on whom his poetical mantle had fallen, should be respectfully requested to accept the appointment as the highest tribute to his genius and worth which the brethren have it in their power to bestow, which motion was unanimously and enthusiastically carried." This is another connecting-link between Burns and this Lodge.

There has been no man connected with this Lodge since the time of Burns who did not believe that Burns was Poet-Laureate

here. It all comes to this, the credibility of the witnesses.

I am honoured with the friendship and affiliation of Lodge No. 1, Mary's Chapel. The Master of that Lodge, whom I am glad to see here to-night, has given me, as a keepsake, which I shall ever cherish, a mell or mallet made of wood taken from the old Parliament Hall at Edinburgh Castle, and another bit of wood taken from Holyrood Chapel. While I live and my children live they will know that these are not fabrications, because they come to me direct from an honest man with an honest heart. He has also presented to me a little bit of wood from the bed which witnessed the last sigh of Robert Burns. I shall cherish that as long as I live, and nobody can tell me, or my children, or my children's children, that that piece of wood was not part of the bed whereon Robert Burns died.

It depends, my brothers, on the credibility of witnesses, and I know of no men more worthy of credence than those who used to come here in the days of Erskine, and others associated with Burns in this Lodge. What a galaxy of genius! How they pass in long review before us! How the old Hall grows wider and the tessellated floor dearer as it rings again to their cheery companionship! No wonder that old Canongate Kilwinning with hallowed associations cherishes her great Laureate's birthday, and exclaims—

"Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,  
And fondly broods with miser care.  
Time but the impression stronger makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear."

## VI.—AT THE BURNS CENTENNIAL (JANUARY, 1859).

*By JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.*

A HUNDRED years! they're quickly fled  
With all their joy and sorrow;  
Their dead leaves shed upon the dead,  
Their fresh ones sprung by morrow!  
And still the patient seasons bring  
Their change of sun and shadow;  
New birds will sing with every spring,  
New violets spot the meadow.

A hundred years! and Nature's powers  
No greater grown nor lessened!  
They saw no flowers more sweet than ours,  
No fairer new moon's crescent.  
Would she but treat us poets so,  
So from our winter free us,  
And set our slow old sap aflow  
To sprout in fresh ideas:

Alas! think I, what worth or parts  
 Have brought me here competing,  
 To speak what starts in myriad hearts  
 With Burns's memory beating!  
 Himself had loved a theme like this;  
 Must I be its entomber?  
 No pen save his but's sure to miss  
 Its pathos or its humour.

As I sat musing what to say,  
 And how my verse to number,  
 Some elf in play passed by that way,  
 And sank my lids in slumber;  
 And on my sleep a vision stole,  
 Which I will put in metre,  
 Of Burns's soul at the wicket-hole  
 Where sits the good Saint Peter.

The saint, methought, had left his post  
 That day to Holy Willie,  
 Who swore "each ghost that comes shall toast  
 In brunstane, will he, nill he;  
 There's nane need hope with phrases fine  
 Their score to wipe a sin frae;  
 I'll chalk a sign, to save their tryin',—  
 A hand (B) and *Vide infra*!"

Alas! no soil's too cold or dry  
 For spiritual small potatoes,  
 Scrimped natures spry the trade to ply  
 Of *diaboli advocatus*;  
 Who lay bent pins in the penance-stool  
 Where Mercy plumps a cushion,  
 Who've just one rule for knave and fool,  
 It saves so much confusion:

So, when Burns knocked, Will knit his brows,  
 His window-gap made scanter,  
 And said, "Go rouse the other house,  
 We lodge no Tam o' Shanter!"  
 "We lodge!" laughed Burns. "Now well I  
 see

Death cannot kill old nature;  
 No human flea but thinks that he  
 May speak for his Creator!

"But, Willie, friend, don't turn me forth,  
 Auld Clootie needs no gauger;  
 And if on earth I had small worth,  
 You've let in worse, I'se wager!"  
 "Na, nane has knockit at the yett  
 But found me hard as whunstane;  
 There's chances yet your bread to get  
 Wi' Auld Nick, guagin' brunstane."

Meanwhile the Unco' Guid had ta'en  
 Their place to watch the process,  
 Flattening in vain on many a pane  
 Their disembodied noses.  
 Remember, please, 'tis all a dream;  
 One can't control the fancies  
 Through sleep that stream with wayward  
 gleam,  
 Like midnight's boreal dances.

Old Willie's tone grew sharp's a knife:  
 "In primis, I indite ye,  
 For makin' strife wi' the water o' life,  
 And preferrin' aqua vitæ!"  
 Then roared a voice with lusty din,  
 Like a skipper when 'tis blowy,  
 "If *that's* a sin I'd ne'er got in,  
 As sure as my name's Noah!"

Baulked, Willie turned another leaf,—  
 "There's many here have heard it,  
 To the pain and grief o' true belief,  
 Say hard things o' the clergy!"  
 Then rang a clear tone over all,—  
 "One plea for him allow me:  
 I once heard call from o'er me, 'Saul,  
 Why persecutest thou me?'"

To the next charge vexed Willie turned,  
 And, sighing, wiped his glasses:  
 I'm much concerned to find ye yearned  
 O'er-warmly toward the lasses!"  
 Here David sighed; poor Willie's face  
 Lost all its self-possession:  
 "I leave this case to God's own grace;  
 It baffles *my* discretion!"

Then sudden glory round me broke,  
 And low melodious surges  
 Of wings whose stroke to splendour woke  
 Creation's farthest verges;  
 A cross stretched, ladder-like, secure  
 From earth to Heaven's own portal,  
 Whereby God's poor, with footing sure,  
 Climbed up to peace immortal.

I heard a voice serene and low  
 (With my heart I seemed to hear it)  
 Fall soft and slow as snow on snow,  
 Like grace of the heavenly spirit;  
 As sweet as ever new-born son  
 The croon of new-made mother,  
 The voice begun, "Sore tempted one!  
 Then, pausing, sighed, "Our brother:

"If not a sparrow fall, unless  
The Father sees and knows it,  
Think ! recks he less his form express,  
The soul his own deposit ?  
If only dear to Him the strong,  
That never trip nor wander,  
Where were the throng whose morning song  
Thrills His blue arches yonder ?

"Do souls alone clear-eyed, strong-kneed,  
To Him true service render,  
And they who need His hand to lead,  
Find they His heart untender ?  
Through all your various ranks and fates  
He opens doors to duty,  
And he that waits there at your gates  
Was servant of His Beauty.

"The Earth must richer sap secrete,  
(Could ye in time but know it !)  
Must juice concrete with fiercer heat,  
Ere she can make her poet ;  
Long generations, go and come,  
At last she bears a singer,  
For ages dumb, of senses numb  
The compensation-bringer !

"Her cheaper broods in palaces  
She raises under glasses,  
But souls like these, Heaven's hostages,  
Spring shelterless as grasses ;  
They share Earth's blessing and her bane,  
The common sun and shower ;  
What makes your pain to them is gain,  
Your weakness is their power.

"These larger hearts must feel the rolls  
Of stormier-waved temptation ;  
These star-wide souls between their poles  
Bear zones of tropic passion.  
He loved much !—that is gospel good,  
How e'er the text you handle ;  
From common wood the cross was hewed,  
By love turned priceless sandal.

"If scant his service at the kirk,  
He paters heard and aves  
From choirs that lurk in hedge and birk,  
From blackbird and from mavis ;  
The cowering mouse, poor unroofed thing,  
In him found Mercy's angel ;  
The daisy's ring brought every spring  
To him Love's fresh evangel !

"Not he the threatening text who deals  
Is highest 'mong the preachers,  
But he who feels the woes and weals  
Of all God's wandering creatures.  
He doth good work whose heart can find  
The spirit 'neath the letter ;  
Who makes his kind of happier mind,  
Leaves wiser men and better.

"They make Religion be abhorred  
Who round with darkness gulf her,  
And think no word can please the Lord  
Unless it smell of sulphur.  
Dear Poet-heart, that childlike guessed  
The Father's loving-kindness,  
Come now to rest ! Thou didst His hest,  
If haply 'twas in blindness !"

Then leapt Heaven's portals wide apart,  
And at their golden thunder  
With sudden start I woke, my heart  
Still throbbing-full of wonder.  
"Father," I said, "'tis known to Thee  
How Thou thy Saints preparest ;  
But this I see,—Saint Charity  
Is still the first and fairest !"

Dear Bard and Brother ! let who may  
Against thy faults be railing,  
(Though far, I pray, from us be they  
Who never had a failing !)  
One toast I'll give, and that not long,  
Which thou would'st pledge if present,—  
To him whose song, in nature strong  
Makes man of prince and peasant !

## VII.—BURNS IN AN ENGLISH DRESS.

WE are not aware whether any of our literary enthusiasts in Burnsiana is familiar with a work which has just come into our hands, entitled "A Collection of Songs, Moral, Sentimental, Instructive, and Amusing ; selected

and revised by the Rev. James Plumtre, M.A., Fellow of Clare Hall." It does not appear in the M'Kie Burns Library Catalogue, and there is no mention of it in the Burns Bibliography. Yet it contains some curious



comments on our national poet, and a number of quotations from the poems, so strangely garbled as to be scarcely recognisable. This "Collection" extends over three thick 12mo volumes, and includes a great variety of pieces, classified under such headings as "Patriotic," "Rural," "Soldiers' Songs," "Sailors' Songs," "Friendship," "Love," "Marriage," "Sacred Songs," etc. The publishers are the Rivingtons, and the date on the title page is 1824; but the preface shows that the work was originally published or prepared for publication in this form in 1807. Eleven of the pieces are credited to Burns—two in the first volume, two in the second, and seven in the third. The first extract is the song beginning—

"How can my poor heart be glad  
When absent from my sailor lad,"

and appended to it there is the following note:—

"Robert Burns was originally a ploughman in Ayrshire, in Scotland, and having a natural genius for poetry, he gave way to it and was greatly patronized by the gentry in his own country, and raised considerably above his original station in life. But prosperity is often harder to be borne than adversity, and his elevation in life did not add, perhaps, to his virtue, and consequently not to his happiness. After saying this, it is perhaps necessary further to add that getting a place under the excise and his talents for poetry and conviviality taking him into mixed company, in the latter part of his life he took to drinking. Some of his poetry is very beautiful."

We have been in the habit of speaking and writing of Burns as an ill-starred genius, who had to struggle unequally with adverse circumstances, and who received during his lifetime but scant recognition or patronage from his country. But good Mr. Plumtre has had quite a different view. The poor poet was so "patronised by the gentry" and "raised above his original station in life" as to have had his head turned. It was not, indeed, adversity that killed him but too much prosperity! We wonder what Burns himself would have said to this. He would no doubt have had something to complain of in his pious critic's comments upon his life and

character; but still more would his ire have been kindled by Mr. Plumtre's murderous renderings of his verse. The largest extract is what is called "The Cottager's Saturday Night," and has this introductory note: "The following poem having been written in the Scottish dialect, it is here *translated* for the mere English reader." A few verses may be given to show the exceeding freedom (not to use any harsher term) of the translation:—

"With kindly welcome Jenny brings him in;  
A comely youth; her joy the mother shews;  
Blithe Jenny sees the visit's na ill ta'en;  
The father talks of horses, pigs, and cows.  
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows with joy,  
But dash'd and bashful, scarce can well behave;  
The mother, with a woman's wiles, can spy  
What makes so modest and so grave;  
Well pleas'd to think her child such husband's like  
to have.

"But now the supper crowns their simple board,  
The onion porridge, cheap and wholesome food,  
The milk their only cow does well afford,  
That in the orchard peaceful chews her cud.  
The dame brings forth in complimentary mood,  
To please the lad, the cheese she would not sell,  
And oft he's prest, and oft he calls it good:  
The frugal housewife, garrulous, will tell  
How 'twas a twelvemonth old when flax was in the  
bell.

"The cheerful supper done, with serious face,  
They, round the embers, form a circle wide:  
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,  
The huge big Bible, once his father's pride:  
His hat is reverently laid aside,  
His hoary locks showing so thin and bare:  
From strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
He takes a portion with judicious care;  
And, 'Let us worship God!' he says with solemn  
air."

"The father talks of horses, pigs, and cows;" "The onion porridge;" and "The huge big Bible," are all exquisite specimens of Mr. Plumtre's intelligent appreciation of the poet's meaning. "Man was made to mourn" is transformed into "Man was *doom'd* to mourn." It would never do (the orthodox divine seems to have thought) to let it be said, that man was "made" to mourn; but of course "*doom'd*" to mourn was a different thing and quite proper. The plan of the poem is spoiled by the omission of the introductory verses, and the two verses in which reference is made to the "lordly fel-

low-worm" and "yon lordling's slave" are also left out, probably as being not sufficiently respectful to the "higher orders." Mr. Plumtre, however, attempts to make up for these omissions by adding a verse of his own :

"For Death, if 'mid our trials here,  
To Providence resigned,  
We shed the penitential tear,  
That purifies the mind,  
Will waft the blissful soul on high  
By guardian angels borne,  
Where tears no more shall dim the eye,  
Nor heart again shall mourn."

"A Man's a Man for a' that" appears under the heading "Honest Poverty."—"From the Scotch of Robert Burns." That the Scotch has been pretty well eliminated may be judged from the following :

"What tho' on homely fair we dine,  
Wear *Yorkshire* grey, and all that."

The verse beginning, "Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord," is of course omitted, as an unwar-

rantable liberty of speech with reference to the aristocracy, by one who had been unduly "raised above his original station in life," and so had been spoiled by presumptuous prosperity. Mr. Plumtre is willing to admit, however, that a King is hardly on a level with the Almighty, and so he makes no objection to the verses which follow, although he manages hopelessly to lame one of the lines :

"A prince can make a belted knight,  
A marquis, duke, and all that ;  
But an honest man's above his might,  
*Indeed he cannot make that !*"

In bidding good-bye to Mr. Plumtre we may be excused for saying, in the words of Artemus Ward, that should he ever *forgether* with the Scottish poet in the "happy hunting grounds," there is sure to be "a fite"—unless the amiable and pious parson be willing to take his punishment "lying down."

## VIII.—BURNS IN AMERICA.

*By JOHN G. DOW, Madison, Wis.*

A SCOTSMAN coming to live in this country is agreeably surprised by the American love of Burns's poetry. Burns in America is known, revered and loved in a degree not surpassed by his most enthusiastic anniversary-holders in Ayr or Edinburgh. There is in this country a familiarity with the poet's writings more widely spread, if not more minute than one finds among Scotsmen in their own country.

In America, when the ubiquitous Scot leaves his native country, his patriotism grows, if anything, stronger and more sensitive. Amid strange scenes, strange faces, and alien tongues, memories of the Old Country grow warm in his heart, and the old familiar accent becomes very dear to him. Then it is that Burns's poetry, and more especially his songs, offer a rallying ground for troops of affectionate reminiscences and vague emotions that arise from instincts of the blood. For Burns's poetry is not merely a reflex of the country life of Scotland as he found it in all its beauty and

ugliness—its mingled faith and superstition, piety and irreverence, sobriety and drunkenness, integrity and hypocrisy. It gathers up and preserves a full heritage of national memories, and embodies them, while it interprets those evasive moods and tones of national life and character which for centuries have constituted the individuality of the race and nation. Burns's poetry, therefore, means ever so much more to the Scot abroad than it means to the Scot at home. Hence in America among Scotsmen, and those who claim Scotch descent, Burns is more lovingly, as well as more extensively, read than he is in the land of his nativity.

But Scotch blood explains only a little of the American regard for Burns. In this country he receives a profounder and sincerer homage than any that springs from the sentimental claims of race and nationality—a homage that is rendered, not by reason, but in spite of much that is intrinsic in the poet's character and work ; a homage that takes us beyond the limited range of Burns's patriotism,

and reveals the true horizon of the poet's greatness. Notwithstanding his excessive Scotchness Burns has struck home to the American heart as no other outside writer has done before or since, and won from a practical, but essentially non poetic, people an appreciative homage which is the most eloquent tribute yet accorded to his genius.

At the time of Burns's advent there was not a single genuine human being in the whole world of British letters. We are familiar with the character of the century which preceded him—its external elegance, its splendid formalities; its devotion to the drawing room with its magnificent bows and fair speeches, its powder, patch, and furbelow, its wig, sword and shoe-buckle; its contempt for the country life which yielded only boobies and gulls; its pride of intellect which stifled all passions and seared all imagination; and, finally, its insincerity, its emptiness, its inability to satisfy the human craving for what is natural and true to nature. We know how this desiccating atmosphere warped and withered the great passionate heart of Swift, and drove to a fate worse than death the most powerful, most tender, genius of all the time between Milton and Burns. But the reaction came. The hollow pomp of the 18th century regime was rudely shaken, first, by the revolt of the despised American colonists, and later by the terrible sincerity of the French revolutionaries. Ideas were transfigured. Literature abandoned the fashionable salon and sought the open air and the fresh fields. Poetry re-opened the well springs of passion and imagination, and man's spirit once more, as in the days of Shakespeare, found its true solace in a return to nature and humanity. The literary, like the political revolution of the 18th century, consisted chiefly in the assertion and establishment of the dignity of individual man; it lay also in a return to the healing powers of nature, and in both of these respects the Napoleon of this revolution was Robert Burns. Nature was his high priestess in song; and when equality and fraternity were being branded with blood and fire on the face of Europe, Burns gathered as into a burning focus the whole human sentiment of

the revolution in "A man's a man for a' that." This was a voice straight from the democracy, speaking for the democracy with an unexampled directness and dignity—the voice of one who stood on his own rock of independence, and esteeming every man at his mere intrinsic worth, proclaimed the new creed and gospel of humanity.

In this Burns is more in sympathy with American than with Scottish life. The principle of individual worth and the spirit of independence which are to us in this country commonplaces of our daily lives are not so familiar in Scotland of to-day, and in the days of Burns they were startling in their novelty. It is true that Burns seemed to have failed miserably, that he was silently crushed out and down by the allied respectabilities of social caste, whose extinction he so proudly heralded. But despite his apparent failure there is in the life and poetry of this herald of the dawn an immortal record of the true majesty of manhood. Therein lies the great ethic of his work, therein lies his just claim to sit among the great and beneficent spirits of the human race. Against the conventions, prejudices and hypocritical affectations of the old era he may have launched in vain his fiercest shafts of scorn and satire. Pitiably, too, his footsteps may have occasionally strayed from the narrow path of conventional right. But in spite of wild revolt and pitiful error he ever remained true to his spiritual allegiance, and he never lost his clear vision of the integrity of man. Add to this, that under all his rough drollery and rude defiance, his airy humour and elastic lightness of heart, there is that "accent of high seriousness" which is a necessary character of true greatness. Amid all the versatile moods of his wonderfully flexible mind, even in his hottest revulsion from the religious cant around him, Burns is at heart profoundly reverential. Carlyle by a curious act of critical blindness lamented that Burns had no religion; he might as well have said that Burns had no soul for melody. He was certainly no Puritan, as Carlyle was, and perhaps it is the Puritan's privilege to deny religion to the poet. But if the ultimate essence of the Gospels is love or charity, if he prayeth best who loveth best, few indeed



have more richly merited the crown than he whose every heart-beat was quickened with divine compassion. Burns had both faith and hope—faith in a supreme arbiter of his destiny, and that trust which is a surer form of hope, and through the sanctity of his reserve we can hear the cottar's "Let us worship God!" But his religion has in it little of the Puritan's theology and nothing whatever of the Puritan's "other worldliness." It is the religion of humanity inspired by the

divine *afflatus* of the singer, and if ever a soul was attuned to the humane harmonies of the universe, it was the soul of him who sung of the field mouse, the wounded hare, the daisy, and the cottar's Saturday night. "I maun hae a deil," said the old Scotswoman when they tried to shake her faith in hell. Burns, too, has a deil, and the boundless charity of his heart goes out to poor old Satan like a message direct from heaven itself,

"O wad ye tak' a thoct and men'!"

### IX.—A ROBERT BURNS REVERIE.

*From "The Leeds Mercury."*

Ae nicht, sat by the ingle cheek,  
Musin' on Scottish sang an' story,  
There passed, as through the fire's faint reek,  
An eerie, strange phantasmagorie.  
I thoct 'twas seventeen aichty-nine,  
When ploughman Rob was a' the fashion;  
An' that, before my glimmering een,  
Rose sights an' scenes in weird procession.

There cam' twa dogs, the first ca'd Cæsar,  
The ither Luath, a ploughman's collie;  
Ane keepit for his master's pleasure—  
Luath, a rantin', rovin' billie.  
Next passed Tam Samson, mourned as deid  
Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' Killie;  
He is the king o' a' the screed,  
Unskathed, as yet, by Death's gleg gullie.

Three hizzies noo cam' down the road—  
Twa dressed in black, the ither shinin';  
An' in their train the unco guid,  
Wi' holy Willie, meek and whinin';  
They're a' gaun tae the Holy Fair,  
Tae get their share o' grace—an' daffin';  
Some fu' o' love divine—but mair  
Are fu' o' frolic, fun an' laughin'.

An' what's this noo comes clatterin' by?  
A frichtened horse—a glowerin' rider;  
"It's Tam himsel'!"—the witches cry,  
"An' Meg, his mare—oh, woe betide her;"  
Wee Nannie flees wi' eldrich howl,  
Her gairment on the night wind sailin';  
Auld Clootie rins wi' sullen scowl,  
An' in the glaur his bagpipes trillin'.

A cottar's beilin' noo appears,  
Where dwell content an' love entwining;  
Long may these guard the coming years—  
Auld Scotia's hope and power combining.  
Aroun' the mountain daisy grows,  
Her snawy bosom sunward spreadin';  
The sleekit, cowerin', timorous mouse  
Lies snug amang his straw-lined beddin'.

But noo a hare cam' hurtlin' by,  
Frae inhumanity a shelter seekin';  
An' in death's grip see Mailie lie—  
Nae mair we'll hear her friendly bleatin'.  
A weel faured lass noo trips awa',  
Decked in her braws, wi' jewels shinin';  
Could she but see what Robin saw;  
That louse upon her bonnet climbin'.

The fire burns blue—my senses reel;  
I giintin' roun' wi' fearsome swither,  
Saw Death, Jock Hornbook, and the Deil—  
The three gaun airm-an'-airm thegither;  
I saw the twa famed brigs o' Ayr,  
An' some o' her braw, sonsie lassies;  
I saw the Doon, clear, winding, fair,  
Whose banks an' braes nae stream sur-  
passes.

An' daunerin' by cam' Captain Grose,  
Takin' his notes for future printin';  
He's aff tae some auld kirkyard close,  
See in his pouch his hammer glintin';  
An' wha's this auld wife in her mutch?—  
It's Poosie Nancie—weel kent kimmer;  
The beggars, tae; wi' limp an' crutch?  
Ay, every jolly, drucken, sinner.



John Barleycorn stalks into view,  
 Still stracht an' strong, wi' joy uprisen;  
 He'll cheer oor Scottish hearts anew,  
 Tho' three kings tried to cut his wizen;  
 I saw a bold John Hielandman  
 Eager to die for Scotland's glory;  
 I marked the Bruce at Bannockburn,  
 And Stirling's carse, red smeared an' gory.

The haggis, wi' his sonsie face,  
 Rich germ o' Scottish pluck an' muscle,  
 Cam' stacherin' in tae tak' his place,  
 Attended by the famous Whustle.  
 The farmer's auld mare Mag was seen;  
 Sax Mauchline belles, sae blithe an'  
 bonnie;  
 A guid, auld-fashioned Hallowe'en;  
 Wull Wastle's wife and Souter Johnny.

An' thus afore my mental gaze  
 Cam' sights an' scenes lang since departed;  
 When, lo! athwart the fire's clear blaze  
 A brighter vision came—I started;  
 'Twas he—the lad ance born in Kyle;  
 I marked the eye, wi' genius burning—  
 The noble brow—the radiant smile—  
 The lofty mien—all humbug spurning.

Though lowly born an' lowly bred,  
 An' sheltered in a humble beilin',  
 His worth and fame shall never fade—  
 His songs e'en noo, oor hearts are thrillin';  
 Gae bring tae me a pint o' wine—  
 I'll drink a toast—the world shall know it—  
 To Robert Burns, for auld lang syne—  
 Oor Scotland's darling ploughman poet.

## X.—THE KILMARNOCK “BURNS.”

### CENTENARY OF PUBLICATION.

*From the “Glasgow Herald,” July 28, 1886.*

SUCH notice as may be necessary concerning a fast-approaching Burns's celebration, unique in its way, cannot well find a more fitting introduction than a document having a very precise as well as a curious reference to the great event of the day. The original, it may be explained, of Wilson's otherwise “Wee Johnnie's,” Account for printing the Kilmar-nock, or first issue of “Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, by Robert Burns,” was unearthed among the papers of a London collector (Robert Cole) by the late Robert Chambers, so fondly remembered by all Burns enthusiasts for his excellent editions of the poet, no less than his generosity to the poet's family. The document, although it may not be absolutely correct in every particular, as will be afterwards noticed, is business-like and to the purpose, and, although brief, makes suggestive reading in connection with any memoir of Burns, but is of special interest when looked at in connection with the forthcoming celebration at Kilmar-nock:—

“MR. ROBERT BURNS

To JOHN WILSON, Dr.

Aug. 28, 1786.—Printing 15 sheets at 19s., .....	£14 5 0
19 reams 13 quires paper at 17s. (a),...	16 4 0
Carriage of the paper, Stitching 612 copies in blue paper at 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.	8 9
	4 9 3
	£35 17 0
Aug. 19, 28, By cash,...	£6 3 0
By 70 copies, 10 10 0	14 13 0
	31 6 0
	£4 11 0
By 9 copies, .....	1 7 0
	£3 4 0
Oct. 6, By cash in full, .....	3 4 0
Kilmarnock—Settled the above account,	
JOHN WILSON (b).”	

In connection with the above bill of charge, it is to be noticed (a) that, by an error in extending the figures, Wilson, so far as the second item is concerned, undercharged Burns, the proper amount being not £16

4s., but £16 14s. Further, over the whole it should be observed (*b*) that 600 copies at the lowest or subscription price of 3s. would produce £90. In the famous autobiographical sketch sent to Dr. Moore, Burns writes of his vanity being highly gratified by the reception given to his first edition, and besides, he added, "I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly *twenty* pounds." It may be there were other expenses besides paper, print, and stitching, possibly the Prospectus, or "Proposals for Printing," as the poet called them, and, it may be, something for advertising, although this is not quite so certain; still, allowing for all minor or incidental charges, £34 seems a large deficiency in connection with so very moderate an account. John Wilson himself, although sneeringly alluded to by the poet as lacking in soul, is known to have been an honourable and straightforward man, who, by diligence and enterprise in business, acquired a handsome competence.

As we know when Burns first commenced to rhyme, so we are happily permitted to know with fair exactness when some of his ware was thought worthy of print, and at length when a gathering of the whole could be ventured upon in such a collection as the first Kilmarnock volume. The somewhat severe life at Mount Oliphant—a severity dictated, no doubt, by high and praiseworthy principles—would appear to have repressed any strong emotional feeling till the poet was in his seventeenth year (1777), when a glow of passion was suddenly excited by a "bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass," a year younger than himself, who had been assigned to him as the partner of his labours at harvest work. His "Handsome Nell"—Nelly Kilpatrick by name—would seem from the recollection of Mrs. Begg to have been the daughter of the local blacksmith, who lent Burns that *History of Sir William Wallace* which poured, he wrote, a Scottish prejudice into his veins "destined to boil along these till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest." Young Nelly is recorded to have sung a song composed by a neighbouring country lad, which put Burns on his mettle at least to equal if not surpass. The result was his first known song, "very puerile and silly," he

afterwards confessed, but "composed in a wild enthusiasm of passion," and, writing to Dr. Moore, ten years later, "to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies at the remembrance." Other songs like "My Nannie, O," and "Tibbie, I hae seen the Day," as well as the graver pieces of "Winter—a Dirge," and the "Dying Words of Poor Mailie," followed in the six years between 1777 and 1783, when the Burns family resided at cold, cheerless Lochlea; but it was not till next year, or 1784, when the poet, with his mother and Gilbert, had entered on Mossiel that any serious consideration was given to the notion of preserving even the best of the fugitive pieces in a permanent form. The cheery "Epistle to Davie," commencing "While winds frae aff Ben Lomond blaw," was the immediately exciting cause. "It was, I think," says Gilbert Burns, in the summer of 1784, "when he (the poet) and I, in the interval of harder labour, were weeding in the garden (kailyard), that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle. I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed." This poem, as we now have it—the first in which he used the peculiar and difficult metre of Montgomery's "Cherrie and Slae"—would appear to have been completed at the close of 1784, or the beginning of 1785. The "Epistle" was quickly followed by the rattling satire of "Death and Dr. Hornbook," with other epistles to Lapraik of Muirkirk, and the earliest as well as the most trenchant of the poet's polemical pieces. The quarrel of the "Twa Herds" and "Holy Willie's Prayer," with graver pieces like "Verses to a Mouse," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "The Twa Dogs;" also "The Ordination," "Hallowe'en," "The Jolly Beggars," and an "Address to the Unco Guid," besides several songs and minor poems, all belonging to the period of unexampled literary fertility between the last six months of 1785 and the early days of 1786. Nothing, however, is known to have been printed up to this time, such different pieces as became known in the poet's neighbourhood being passed from

friend to friend in manuscript. Burns, somewhat injudiciously, it is thought, permitted this to be done even with pieces so lengthy and valuable as his "Cotter's Saturday Night." On the 3rd March, 1786, a month, or thereby, before the resolution was taken to publish, the poet wrote to his friend John Kennedy, sub-factor at Dumfries House:—"I have done myself the pleasure of complying with your request in sending you my Cottager. If you have a leisure minute I should be glad you would copy it, and return me either the original or the transcript, as I have not a copy of it by me, and I have a friend who wishes to see it. The press was to be put in motion less from motives of ambition or vanity than because "hungry Ruin had him in the wind" through the Armour scandal. When "Holy Willie's Prayer" made its appearance Burns wrote of it as alarming the kirk-session so much that several meetings were held "to look over their spiritual artillery, if happily any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, 'The Lament.' This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart and mistaken the reckoning of rationality." To relieve the poet from such distressing pressure as was put upon him by Jean Armour's father, and at the same time to permit of his proceeding as a kind of clerk to the West Indies, influential friends like Gavin Hamilton and Robert Aiken advised the instant publication of all such poems and songs as could fairly be judged worthy of public acceptance. Countless readers for a century back at home and in foreign parts have not failed nor are yet failing to realise what a wealth was thereby added to the literature of Scotland. The work of printing was undertaken by John Wilson, Kilmarnock, most likely under some guarantee more or less formal, although other friends of less note soon made themselves so active in the work of subscription that no loss at least was likely to be encountered.

On the 3rd April, 1786, Burns writes to Aiken that his "Proposals for Publishing" were just being sent to the press, and before the month closed they were in the hands of many zealous friends throughout Ayrshire and elsewhere. The printing of the poems is likely to have commenced some time in May. Burns, under heavy censure from the "unco guid," was then at Mossgiel, but before many weeks were over, certainly before the printing was completed towards the close of July, he was in hiding among friends from such terrors of the law as could be let loose on him by Jean Armour's father. Not only were the later proof-sheets corrected during this miserable period of the poet's life, but he contrived to write several new pieces, some of them, it is but right to say, of a cheerful and hopeful strain. Nor was the Armour family the only distress bearing on Burns at this time. Reckless in his loves—more reckless, writes Professor Nichol somewhat strongly, than Lord Byron, and almost as much so as King David—the summer of this same eventful 1786 saw the melancholy close of that mysterious "Highland Mary" episode in the poet's life—an episode made mysterious by himself, and not now possible of solution, at least in connection with the Armour affair. The little volume of poems in which so much interest centres would appear to have seen the light on or about the 30th of July. Wilson's interesting statement already referred to, besides the memorandum of charge and discharge, presents also as complete a list of subscribers as we are ever likely to obtain. Mr. Aiken, of Ayr, gets one copy on the 31st of July, 12 copies on the 5th August, 20 on the 10th, 40 on the 12th, 36 on the 14th, and 36 more on the 16th, the whole making up nearly one-fourth of the impression disposed of by this amiable and accomplished gentleman, the father, readers need hardly be reminded, of that Andrew Aiken for whose youthful guidance was written in May the now well-known epistle included in the volume commencing "I long hae thought, my youthfu' friend." Robert Muir, a Kilmarnock friend of the poet, obtained on the 2nd August two copies, and within a fortnight 70 additional. Then there was James Smith, of Mauchline—



"Adieu, too, to you too,  
My Smith, my bosom frien';  
When kindly you mind me,  
Oh then befriend my Jean."

Smith obtained one copy on 4th August; on the 8th, 40. Gavin Hamilton disposed of 40 copies; David Sillar, 14; Kennedy of Dumfries House, 20; Logan of Laight, 20; Morton of Cumnock, 6; Niven of Maybole, the "Willie" of Kirkoswald days, 7; Gilbert Burns, 70; McWhinnie, 20. Burns himself received one copy on the 3rd August, another on the 4th, and one more on the 5th. Finally, on the 28th August, less than a month after the volume was ready, 599 had been disposed of, leaving only 15 copies on hand. It is not known for certain that any copy of the poems found its way to Moss-gil for family use. But the eagerness of friends to help only imperfectly indicates the welcome given to the volume. Robert Heron writes of getting the book at night and lying awake till he had read it through. "Even ploughboys, (he continued) and maid-servants would have gladly bestowed their hardly-earned wages if they might but procure the works of Burns." The volume was published without any formal Dedication, although one piece bearing such a title was included in the text, addressed to Gavin Hamilton, and beginning "Expect na, sir, in this narration, a fleetchin', flet'h'in' dedication." A Preface from the poet's pen modestly hinted that among the learned, at least, and the polite some allowance should be made for education and circumstances of life. Though a rhymer, he wrote, from his earliest years, "at least from the earliest impulse of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship awakened his vanity so far as to make him think anything of his worth showing, and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigue of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings—the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears—in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses,

and in these he found poetry to be its own reward." But, slightly apologetic as the Preface was in tone, Burns, it is pleasant to know, was not insensible to his own abilities. A twelvemonth after publication he told friends that when publication details were being settled he thought the book would do. That it did do, and do very handsomely, will be apparent from statements made above. The subscription price, as has been mentioned, was 3s. A copy, which now-a-days is but rarely in the market for sale, is not thought excessively dear at £60 or even £70; and could one be produced in the original paper boards, if possible, altogether uncut, a very much larger sum would be offered. There is no reason, however, to suppose that any such rarity is in existence. The first nine guineas gathered in by Burns for his book would appear to have been spent in paying for a passage to the West Indies, the extremely painful necessity being thereby avoided of "indenting" or apprenticing himself to Dr. Douglas, owner of the plantation, in order that at some future convenient time a free passage might be secured for the poet. Now the poet began to bewail his lot in such strains of undying melody as "Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary?" "Farewell old Scotia's bleak domains," where Jean and Bess, with Hamilton and Aiken, are each tendered "a grateful, warm adieu," in terms only rivalled for touching tenderness by "The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast," wherein the downcast bard sadly wrote:—

"Farewell my friends, farewell my foes,  
My peace with these, my love with those—  
The bursting tears my heart declare,  
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr."

The sudden change in the prospects of Burns, through the mediation of Dr. Lawrie, Loudon, and Dr. Blacklock, the kindly notice of the poems by Henry Mackenzie in the "Lounger," the journey to Edinburgh, or the hearty welcome Burns received there, hardly lie within the scope of this paper, beyond saying that to the honour of his native country, which has hardly been sufficiently recognised, the obscure Ayrshire ploughman found that his Kilmarnock edition of *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, was but a prelude to a



second, or "Edinburgh," issue, as it is called, with a list of subscribers never approached

till his time by any book, poetical or other, published in Scotland.

## XI.—TAM O' SHANTER.

BY CHARLES H. GOVAN.

*Given as an introduction to the recitation of the poem at an en'ertainment of Scotia Lodge, F. and A. M. Chickering Hall, New York,—Hallowe'en, 1887.*

THE story of "Tam o' Shanter" is very much like that of "Rip Van Winkle." Indeed, Rip Van Winkle has been called "the Dutch Tam o' Shanter." Rip was fond of the bottle. Tam was equally fond of the bottle. Rip's wife was a scold. Tam's spouse was also a scold. Rip met with a supernatural adventure while abroad in a thunderstorm, and that is precisely what befell Tam.

The real name of Burns's hero was Douglas Grahame, of the farm of Shanter, but it is not necessary to call him by any other title than the rhythmical one bestowed on him by the poet.

Tipplers are like boys—never happy unless away from home—and so one day Tam o' Shanter escaped from his wife's clamorous tongue, and mounting his grey mare Meg, galloped off as fast as he could to the neighbouring town of Ayr, where he lost no time in hunting up his dearest foe, Souter Johnny—Shoemaker Johnny—his companion in many a spree. Together they repaired to their favourite boozing place, and when the evening closed in Tam found himself snugly seated at a fireside far more dear to him than his own, and almost as familiar—the Souter at his elbow, telling him funny stories; a jolly boniface supplying him with foaming draughts of powerful Scotch ale; a buxom landlady beaming upon him through fragrant tobacco-mists. Never was the Souter more deliciously droll; never did ale taste better; never was the landlord's laugh more unctuous or the landlady's smile more gracious (she was a much more agreeable woman, Tam could not help thinking, than Mrs. Grahame). No wonder that midnight arrived before Tam departed. When at length he summoned up resolution enough to clamber into the saddle and take the road homeward, it was in the midst of the wildest storm that ever blew in Scotland—at least in Tam's generation. The

lightning flared, the thunder crashed, the rain rattled and the wind howled. Tam's homeward course lay past the scene of many a dreadful story told late at night by smouldering peat fires to shuddering listeners. Here an unfortunate pedlar had perished miserably in the snow, a little further on, where a huge rock stood near a clump of birch trees, a drunken "ne'er-do-weel" had broken his useless neck; some distance further on, a party of hunters had one day found a murdered babe; on yet further was an abandoned well, guarded by an aged hawthorn tree, where a wretched old crone had hanged herself.

But the most dreadful landmark of all was Kirk Alloway, a little old ruined church near a bridge spanning the river Doon over which Tam had to cross. Any old wife could tell you that this was the worst-haunted place in all Scotland. As Tam approached the once sacred edifice from an adjacent wood he found it ablaze with a light that outshone the lightning, and through the doorless doorway and the windowless casements he beheld a concourse of warlocks and witches dancing like mad about a long table on which was displayed an assortment of corpses and other cheerful objects. The music proceeded from a huge black animal, the shape of a dog and the size of a bear, ensconced in a window seat at the eastern extremity of the kirk, which Tam knew instinctively to be the great enemy of mankind himself, for surely no one else could have played the bagpipes with such unearthly skill. Drink had made Tam insensible to fear. Instead of fleeing as a sober man would have done he rode boldly forward. This reveals another point of similarity between the heroes of Burns and Irving. Tam here showed the same quality that distinguished the imperturbable Rip Van Winkle in his colloquy with the ghostly pirates,

namely, Dutch courage. Prominent in the dance was a young and handsome witch possessed of extraordinary strength and agility. She executed such astounding leaps, bounds and pirouettes as would have made any opera premiere, or even Fanny Elsser herself, turn green with envy. Tam became so enthusiastic at her performance that he involuntarily applauded—and betrayed his presence. Instantly the lights were extinguished, and forth upon the midnight air, their phosphorescent forms gleaming through the darkness, came the whole infernal host, all eager to fasten their clutches on the unhappy mortal who had dared to disturb their orgies. Tam wheeled his horse and made for the bridge. Any one versed in the folk-lore of Scotland will tell you that if you are pursued under like circumstances and you can manage to reach the middle of a running stream, you are safe—the arch-fiend himself is powerless against you. The keystone of the bridge became, therefore, Tam's objective point, and

to it he urged his sturdy mare with voice, whip and spur.

Under the influence of terror Meg developed a speed that might easily have won her the Derby. But the poor beast was not striving against earthly competitors. Nannie, the athletic witch, showed herself as superior in the chase as in the dance, and gained most appallingly on poor Tam. Horse, rider and witch gained the bridge at almost the same instant, and just as Meg was in the act of clearing the keystone the witch caught her by the tail, which instantly came off in the infernal grasp as though blasted by a lightning stroke. But the mischief ended here. The river Doon now lay between the baffled demons and their intended victim. The tailless Maggie and her now thoroughly sobered master finished their homeward journey in safety, and it is to be hoped that, as water had proved to be Tam's salvation on this occasion, he was more partial to it ever afterward.

## XII.—HAWTHORNE'S FANTASY OF BURNS THE AGED.

BY REV. ARTHUR JOHN LOCKHART.

SERIOUSLY to think of Burns as an old man is as incongruous as to think of him as laird of an estate, or millionaire, bank-president, railway director and monopolist, or whatever else of this world worldly flourishes most briskly. There are heads never meant for silver hairs; it is in vain to see in our fancy the almond blossoms there. The venerable beauty that adorned the brows of bards less passionate, the grandeur in decay of minds mighty but restrained, were not appointed for such portentous uncurbed spirits as bore the names of Mozart, of Burns and Byron. Their lives on earth were not briefer than we deem they must have been, pursuing such a course as theirs. The meteor's rapid brightness predicts its sudden extinction,—not that these were meteoric, save in their brilliant celerity. Yet we have imagined what they might have accomplished, and what they might have become in the graver, steadier years that here they never saw. If, for a moment, we should be inclined to lament,

with Longfellow, that Burns should have died so young, leaving

“ Unfinished what he might achieve,”

we soon return to a different mood, reflecting—

“ Yet better sure

Is this than wandering up and down,

An old man, in a country town,

Infirm and poor.

For now he haunts his native land,

As an immortal youth.”

Whoever has read the “ Mosses From An Old Manse ” will have found in the fantastic “ P's Correspondence,” a conception of the Scottish Bard, ingenious, but not very natural or pleasing. The mind of the supposed writer, though intelligent and literary, is badly flawed, and the wild things it dictates have a singular air of probability, even when most impossible. Byron, Shelley, Napoleon, Burns and others, are written out in the reverse of what they were. The shadows of the great departed are made to pass singularly before

us, and we see, in a new light and in grotesque form, men whose bodies have long been dust, whose names symbols of immortality. Here the children of the eternal prime are pictured as octogenarians, and in incongruous situations and relations, having recanted all their heresies and reformed all their lives. It is only appropriate here to detail what is given concerning the present subject.

"Only think of my good fortune! The venerable Robert Burns—now, if I mistake not, in his eighty-seventh year—happens to be making a visit to London, as if on purpose to afford me an opportunity of grasping him by the hand. For upwards of twenty years past he has hardly left his quiet cottage in Ayrshire for a single night, and has only been drawn hither now by the irresistible persuasion of all the distinguished men in England. They wish to celebrate the patriarch's birthday by a festival. It will be the greatest literary triumph on record. Pray Heaven the little spirit of life within the aged bard's bosom may not be extinguished in the lustre of that hour! I have already had the honour of an introduction to him at the British Museum, where he was examining a collection of his own unpublished letters interspersed with songs which have escaped the notice of his biographers.

"Poh! Nonsense! What am I thinking of? How should Burns have been embalmed in biography, when he is still a hearty old man?

"The figure of the bard is tall and in the highest degree reverend—nor the less so that is much bent by the burden of time. His white hair floats like a snowdrift around his face, in which are seen the furrows of intellect and passion, like the channels of headlong torrents that had foamed themselves away. The old gentleman is in excellent preservation, considering his time of life. He has that crickety sort of liveliness—I mean the cricket's humour of chirping for any cause or none—which is perhaps the most favourable mood that can befall extreme old age. Our pride forbids us to desire it for ourselves, although we perceive it to be a beneficence of nature in the case of others. I was surprised to find it in Burns. It seems as if his ardent heart and brilliant imagination had

both burnt down to the last embers, leaving only a little flickering flame in one corner, which keeps dancing upward and laughing all by itself. He is no longer capable of pathos. At the request of Allan Cunningham, he attempted to sing his song, 'To Mary In Heaven,' but it was evident that the feeling of those verses, so profoundly true and simply expressed, was entirely beyond the scope of his present sensibilities; and when a touch of it did partially awaken him, the tears immediately gushed into his eyes and his voice broke into a tremulous cackle. And yet he indistinctly knew wherefore he was weeping. Ah! he must not again think of Mary in Heaven until he shake off the dull impediment of time and ascend to meet her there.

"Burns then began to repeat 'Tam o' Shanter,' but was so tickled with its wit and humour—of which, however, I did suspect he had but a traditionary sense—that he soon burst into a fit of chirping laughter, succeeded by a cough which brought his not very agreeable exhibition to a close. On the whole, I would rather not have witnessed it. It is a satisfactory idea, however, that the last forty years of the peasant-poet's life have been passed in competence and perfect comfort. Having been cured of his bardic improvidence for many a day past and grown as attentive to the main chance as a canny Scotsman should be, he is now considered to be quite well off as to pecuniary circumstances. This, I suppose, is worth having lived so long for.

"I took occasion to inquire of some of the countrymen of Burns in regard to the health of Sir Walter Scott. His condition, I am sorry to say, remains the same as for ten years past: it is that of a hopeless paralytic palsied not more in body than in those nobler attributes of which the body is the instrument. And thus he vegetates from day to day and from year to year at that splendid fantasy of Abbotsford which grew out of his brain, and became a symbol of the great romancer's tastes, feelings, studies, prejudices and modes of intellect. Whether in verse, prose, or architecture, he could achieve but one thing, although that one in infinite variety. There he reclines on a couch in his library, and is



said to spend whole hours of every day in dictating tales to an amanuensis. To an imaginary amanuensis, for it is not deemed worth any one's trouble now to take down what flows from that once brilliant fancy, every image of which was formerly worth gold and capable of being coined. Yet Cunningham, who has lately seen him, assures me that there is now and then a touch of genius, a striking combination of incident or a picturesque trait of character, such as no other man alive could have hit off, a glimmer from that ruined mind as if the sun had suddenly flashed on a half-rusted helmet in the gloom of an ancient hall. But the plots of these romances become inextricably confused; the characters melt into one another, and the tale loses itself like the course of a stream flowing through muddy and marshy ground."

We include the paragraph on Scott, which implies that he must have been a literary contemporary with Burns, and his pleased intimate; a fancy which brings to mind the only occasion of their meeting—a memory, transient perhaps in the mind of their elder

bard, but treasured and unfading in that of the other. How earnestly we looked the other day at the print taken from that painting which represents the only occasion on which the two greatest Scotchmen were for an hour together,—in Sciennes' House, in Edinburgh, the residence of Prof. Adam Fergusson. The grave Professor may go on sturdily poking the fire, seated with his back to the poet, as if unconscious of his worth and greatness. Dugald Stewart, John Home, Adam Smith, James Hutton, and other most respected guests, may sit by, and we will surely glance at them. But our eyes are rivetted on that erect, manly form, standing in front of the picture on the wall, wherein is depicted the

"Child of misery baptized in tears;"

and the face half turned towards us, with the look of pathetic inquiry, on the intent stripping who so eagerly regards him, and who is ready with the required information. Art does well so to enshrine them, for there they never can be old, and their lives never be defaced nor disenchanted.

### XIII.—THE RELIGION OF BURNS.

BY WALTER WALSH.

IT may not be altogether superfluous to remind ourselves that the poet's religion was the religion of a poet. "Religion has been all my life . . . my dearest enjoyment. . . . An irreligious poet is a monster." A poet's religion may have all the ardour and ideality of the post-temper without either the logic of a theologian or the disposition of the saint. Genius holds no license for sin, indeed, but it is accompanied by abnormal susceptibilities, not necessarily balanced by severer virtue or stronger will. Burns has been credited with an exceptional weakness of will, whereas his trouble lay in the super-human passion of his nature. This, which was his glory as a poet, was his snare and his shame as a man:—

"But yet the light that led astray  
Was light from heaven."

Few poets have been so passionate as Burns. The man was a flaming volcano.

Whether the matter in hand was a carousal or a wanton, a satire or a song, he flung into it the energy of a supremely rich and luxuriant nature. He was like a tree whose restraining bark is burst by fullness of sap. The matter might be *in inferno*, the manner was always *in excelsis*. The reins were ever on the neck of the steed. Before the gigantic insistence of his desires, his resolves were as contemptible as the green withes of Samson. When the frenzy of his mood was upon him, he trampled under foot alike every dictate of prudence and every precept of religion. As with Saul of Tarsus, a wild war was ever raging between flesh and spirit; and while Saul's anguished "O wretched man! who shall deliver me," was in some form or another always upon his lips, the triumphant "I thank God who giveth us the victory" was denied him. Hence the unparalleled extremes between which his colossal passions



ranged. He mounted up to the heavens : he went down again to the depths. Who can read his "Tragic Fragment," his "Remorse," or his letter to "Mr. Cunningham," without being moved with compassion for a soul so consumed by passion, so stabbed by poignant regrets, so consciously helpless to flee the ill he would not, yet knows he shall do? Wave after wave of fiery remorse, love, defiance, shame, recklessness, despair, chase each other through his bosom.

The tremendous comparison of himself to "Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel," falls upon us very pitifully, very remorsefully, and paralyzes the condemnation upon our tongues. And these two propositions one might dare maintain in the face of all the world—that Burns's faithful Chaucer-like delineations of men and manners did infinitely less harm to virtue than the rose water vice and gilded sentimental seduction-mongering of the contemporary comedians and later novelists ; and that so far from his bacchanals and erotics lowering the moral tone of Scotland, his songs greatly purified Scottish literature, while his humanity and downright sincerity saved Scotland from the worse sin of hypocrisy. At any rate, whoever will censure Burns may rest assured that Burns will censure himself more :—

"The poor Inhabitant below  
Was quick to learn and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow,  
And softer flame ;  
But thoughtless follies laid him low,  
And stained his name."

Many sinners have been greater than Burns ; few penitents have been so great. Confessing all, extenuating nothing, bowed down beneath the thought of death and judgment, what saint ever displayed a more touching faith than he in his "Prayer in the Prospect of Death ;" or what sinner a more faithful, searching self-scrutiny in his "Stanzas on the same Occasion." Neither fear of hell nor hope of heaven could drive this bravest, sincerest of human souls to make promises he could not hope to keep, to profess what was not in his heart, or to slide off from chastisements he knew to be merited. There were many mendacious orthodoxies in the Scotland of that day, but few such untrimmed veracities.

In that divine book which comforted him so much in a time of violent grief, it is written that the heavenly city is entered by twelve gates. One of these, we cannot doubt, is called the gate of Penitence ; and by that gate, as Wordsworth hoped, the soul of Robert Burns may enter in.

#### XIV.—GEN. ISAAC S. CATLIN, ON BURNS.

*From an Address delivered before the King's and Queen's Counties Caledonian Club, January 25th, 1895.*

THE lives, the services and writings of great men, as well as the instructive teachings of great moral events, are too often overlooked, neglected and ultimately forgotten. This is a grave error, both in a national and a more restricted sense. Events which have involved the agitation and settlement of great public or moral issues that have marked the progress of civilization along the highways of the centuries, that have given birth to nations, to genius and to heroes, should be made memorable and should be perpetuated, either by suitable celebration or by monumental inscription, in addition to the perfunctory service of chronological narrative.

The lives of illustrious individuals who have solved momentous questions for the

benefit of the human race, who have broadened and expanded the horizon of liberty and inspired the love of it, who have levelled the iron walls of caste and intolerance, who have enlarged the scope of man's nobler and higher aims and activities even by the march of armies and the havoc of war, or who have thrilled the souls, awakened the intelligence and aroused the conscience of mankind by simple song or lofty eloquence ; by the magical brush or delicate chisel, or who have illumined the darkness of the Bastille, the tortures of the stake and the horrors of the scaffold by heroic martyrdom, should be sacredly cherished and appropriately commemorated for all time. Scotchmen the world over for a century have been keenly alert in keeping

fresh and fair the memory and works of him who, more than any other of their countrymen, has given voice and vitality to all that is grand and noble and lofty in the history and traditions of their native land. You, I repeat, have done your duty nobly toward perpetuating his memory, toward perpetuating the results of the genius of the peasant ploughboy, the sweet poet of nature, not only among Scotchmen but among the lovers of the good, the beautiful and true in all nationalities and in all lands under the sun.

For while he has specially enriched the literature of Scotland, sounded all the depths and shoals of Scottish character and traditions, immortalized all her heroes of pen and sword, all her saints and martyrs, painted in imperishable colours the "omnipotence of the charms" of her bonnie lassies, described in fascinating and picturesque dialect and diction her lowlands and highlands, her rivers and lakes, her banks and braes, and all the rich and endless variety of her marvellous scenery, yet the range and sweep of his genius can no more be confined to the narrow limits of his native Scotia than that of Homer and Virgil. Shakespeare and Milton, Tennyson and Longfellow can be circumscribed within the borders of the lands of their birth. He lived and loved, he wrote and sung for all mankind and for all time. Born in a hovel, springing from the peasantry, his first crude notes thrilled the hearts of the lower classes of his countrymen. The music of the ploughboy's verse and the melody of his song first reached his friends and neighbours in the fields, at the forge and by the loom, and they were entranced by its pathos, its sympathy and sweetness. But it had the stamp of a royal soul, the broad seal of universal humanity, and was destined to reach and level all classes. He was poet born, and that included patriot and philanthropist—the great trinity of attributes and gifts in one. A child of nature, inspired of heaven, he needs must have been patriot and philanthropist, he needs must have loved his country and his race. Though sprouting in the earth and struggling up out of the earth as the grass and the flowers, like them he grew and thrived and unfolded in luxuriance and beauty under the influence of nature: like

them, for a time, he grew up and developed unseen, unheeded and unloved. Nature, untouched by art and unadorned by cunning device of man, was his birthplace, his home, his companion, his help, his solace and his inspiration. The four seasons to him were four great ever-open, ever-present volumes of the universe in which his young soul revelled and his budding intellect feasted, and from which they received more satisfaction, more sustenance and inspiration than from library, museum, and inscription together. In their mysterious revolutions, in their wonderful evolutions, in their marvellous transformations, were treasured the fountains of imagination, was generated the mystic alchemy, was begotten the divine gift of poesy. In all the infinite and multiform variety of animate and inanimate creation, in the unbounded and illimitable diversity of vegetable and animal life which they presented, he read broad and useful lessons, gathered comprehensive knowledge, and received poetic inspiration that books did not contain and could not furnish. Indeed, no mortal born of woman ever saw so many suggestive, impressive, congenial, majestic and glorious visions in the great realm of nature as this awkward and unhappy ploughboy; no human being since the creation ever heard so many weird and awful sounds, so many sweet and thrilling voices, such heavenly music above, around and beneath him, as this prodigy of nature. The soft, emerald light of the glow-worm, the brilliant flashing of the fire-fly, the delicate vari-coloured drapery of declining day, the five luminous, lingering, languishing glories of the rainbow, the dazzling radiance of the sun at noonday, the mild and mellow silver of moon and stars at midnight, each and all filled his soul, tinged his heart and illumined his mind with corresponding light and colour and beauty.

The voices, like the visions of nature, were active and prolific sources of his poetic power and versatility. The bewildering chorus of birds, the drowsy hum of bees, the chirp of cricket, the bleat of lamb, the low of kine, the whispering leaves, the sad sough of the forest, the murmuring brook, the roar of ocean, the blast of tempest, the crash and reverberation of the thunderbolt, indeed, all

the sweet sounds and the mighty tumults of the universe were attuned to his harp, modulated to his muse, gave wings to his imagination and furnished subtle nourishment for his poetic soul. But though the voices and visions and manifestations of nature touched the latent spark in his bosom, started the unquenchable flame that afterward lighted up all Scotland, and finally illuminated the civilized world, yet his comprehensive benevolence, his compassionate, sympathetic soul, his great intellect responded most tenderly and grandly and effectively to the throbbing pulses and crying needs of his fellow-man.

The central, pivotal, controlling forces and influence bearing upon his growth, development, and fame, were love of country, love of liberty, love of the human race. I know full well the sins, the sorrows, and the vices that are said to have impinged upon his noble, lofty nature, and that tinged and tainted his career among his contemporaries, until Pitt and Carlyle and a grand array of his admirers came to the rescue of his fair fame and noble name. We are taught that "to err is human, to forgive divine," and, thank God, we are taught that to forget is human also. I prefer to forget the weaknesses and misfortunes that he showed in common with some of the most beloved and illustrious names in history, with Fox and Sheridan, and with Hamilton and Jefferson, and with others whose honoured names I forbear to mention. I will let those who prefer to dwell upon his periods of excesses and dissipation, and upon his extraordinary amours, have the satisfaction of the ghoul and buzzard in preying on biographical garbage and refuse. I am content to take him and treat him as the pliant child of nature, the friend of the weak and lowly, the champion of manhood, the advocate of human rights. His affiliation with Jacobinism, and his fellowship with the friends of France in her stormy days, were simply the outcome of his sympathy with the efforts of man, wherever born, for better laws, for freer government, and larger liberty. Wherever a human hand was lifted against oppression, wherever a human heart bled in bondage, and a human soul struggled for better and nobler things, he upheld that hand, bound up that heart, and encouraged that soul.

Had he lived a generation sooner, and been the Burns he was, he would have aroused Scotland to another struggle for independence that would, I verily believe, have broken the Union, and marred, if not destroyed, the British Constitution. One ode to Scotland's independence and liberty breathed from the soul of Burns at that earlier period would have set Highlanders and Lowlanders, Celt and Scot, Presbyterian and Catholic, wild with patriotic fury, and all there would have been needed to have turned the land into a camp of soldiers, made the mountains and valleys echo with the tread of armed men, would have been a second Bruce or Wallace to have led them into battle.

Had he been born a decade sooner, and comprehended, as he would then have done, the nature and significance of the struggle of the American Colonies for Independence; had this student of Scotland's own struggles for freedom, this admirer of her own heroes, this worshipper of Bruce and Wallace, understood the mighty meaning of an effort to establish a Government of the people, and for the people in this Western Continent, I have faith to believe he would have raised his voice with Chatham and Pitt, and used his pen in their behalf; aye, I feel certain that he would actually have espoused the cause of the colonists and taken his place by the side of Lafayette, Steuben, Montgomery, and DeKalb, and other alien patriots in the cause of American Independence, and laid down his life, if need be, in behalf of a people struggling for freedom and free Government. As it was, Burns had but just turned his seventeenth year when independence was declared and the war began, and at that age he had a hard struggle of his own on hand to keep soul and body together, and his brother, Gilbert, tells us "That the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life was in a great measure the cause of the depression of spirit with which the poet was so often afflicted through his whole life afterward."

There is one feature in the character of Robert Burns which his professional biographers and especial admirers have not exalted to the eminence it deserves. It is an entirely



practical and unromantic feature, and perhaps for that very reason it has escaped the attention of critics who were seeking only for fine wit and satire, for convivial eccentricities, and for those characteristics related to the higher endowments of mind. He was absolutely honest. And this conspicuous qualification applied to him in his official as well as his individual relation and capacity. While he was holding office in the Excise Department, which at that time presented many opportunities and temptations for peculation, the breath of scandal never touched him. But he was not only honest in the common acceptation of that term, he was an earnest and aggressive reformer, and probably would have been styled and ridiculed as a mug-wump in those days, had that suggestive and euphonest appellation been known, understood, and applied as it is here to-day. He despised and hated the drivelling sycophants, the fawning hypocrites and miserable peculators, that filled the offices and thronged the courts; and his severe animadversions and scathing satire more than once came near bringing down upon him official vengeance and punishment. On one occasion he had commented in unmeasured terms upon the alarming system of corruption between the Executive power and the House of Commons, and when brought face to face with this charge, and with starvation for himself and family, he promised, I doubt not with many misgivings, that he would henceforth seal his lips. The advice and instructions given him sound like a chapter out of our own political history of recent date. He was told that it was "his business to act, not to think," that "whatever measures" were adopted by the representatives of the Government, and "whatever men" were chosen for official station, "it was for him to be silent and obedient." In other words, whatever wrongs and outrages were committed under the protection of royalty, whatever malfeasance or misfeasance in office might come under his observation, whatever instructions he received, whether comporting with the weal or woe of the public service, he should close his eyes,

bridle his tongue, curb his pen, but continue to draw his pay with undeviating regularity. But his intense individuality, his high standard of public probity, his views of individual duty and national honour, his comprehensive sympathy with the struggling masses of his own and other nations, compelled him to break loose from time to time from the galling fetters which position and circumstances had placed around him, and to proclaim to those who could sympathize with him and understand him, and be influenced by him, the real sentiments and broad considerations of government which he entertained. I will close my brief address by reading a passage from a noble letter to his friend, afterward Lord Erskine, the most eloquent forensic orator in England, which illustrates better than anything I can say the lofty character of your countryman, the high order of his patriotism, the true test of his statesmanship, which, superadded to his unparalleled genius as a poet, place him in the list of immortal names, of master minds and mighty influences of his day and of all future time. He had been told by carping tools of royalty that whatever efforts he might individually make to reform abuses, to elevate the tone of public administration, and to weed out from the public service the mercenary wretches and hirelings who were gnawing at the vitals of the Government, would not only be futile, but would result in disappointment and humiliation. To this he hurled back the following choice bit of invective and impassioned eloquence:—

"Does any man tell me that my individual efforts can be of no service, and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concerns of a nation? I can tell him that it is on such individuals as I that a nation has to rest, both for the hand of support and the eye of intelligence. The uninformed mob may swell a nation's bulk; the titled, tinselled, courtly throng may be its feathered ornament, but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and reflect, yet low enough to keep clear of the venal contagion of a court—these are a nation's strength."



## XV.—WHEN BURNS WAS BORN.

*By WILL CARLETON in "Every Where."*

WHEN Burns was born,  
The winter clouds had gathered with the  
morn,

The snow and ice were camping in the vale,  
The cottage trembled in a savage gale,  
That seemed to know the tiny priest of mirth,  
And strive to sweep his refuge from the earth.  
The little city near him slept and thrived,  
And did not know its prophet had arrived,  
Who soon should make its three short letters  
known

Wherever Fame a sounding blast has blown,  
With silver horn!

Upon that morn,  
A hundred songs that now the world adorn,  
With pictures of the world that form a part,  
Were lying deep in Nature's yearning heart.  
The daisy oft had glittered on the hill,  
But waited for her plough-boy lover still;  
The wounded hare had suffered sore and  
long,

But never yet had heard its funeral song;  
The cunning mouse had plied his petty craft,  
But had not sent the world a text that  
laughed

Mankind to scorn!

John Barleycorn  
Prepared his sweetest rose and sharpest  
thorn;

The witches set their heads and hoofs to  
work,

To hunt O Shanter from the ancient kirk;  
The hills began to put themselves in tune  
To voice the echoes sweet of Bonnie Doon;  
The bonds of Friendship soon should be  
divine,

By that immortal anthem, "Auld Lang  
Syne;"

The cotter's home produced its greatest grief,  
But fame and glory far beyond belief—

When Burns was born!

## XVI.—THE JACOBITE ANCESTRY OF BURNS.

*BY JOHN MUIR, F.S.A., SCOT.*

ONE of the great Officers of State in Scotland when it existed as a separate kingdom was the Earl Marishal. The Marishal commanded the cavalry, and the Lord High Constable the whole of the army. The office of the Earl Marishal was vested in the noble family of Keith. It was reserved by the Articles of Union; and when the heritable jurisdictions were bought by the British Government, it was in the possession of the Crown, having been forfeited at the first Jacobite Rebellion by George Keith, tenth and last Earl Marishal.

Supported by a few Spanish troops, Lord Keith engaged in another attempt on behalf of the exiled family in 1719; but General Wightman scattered the force, and the leaders sought refuge in France. The Earl did not take any part in the rising of 1745. Those who have read Rousseau's Confessions may remember, that in Book XII. of that extraordinary work, Jean Jacques gives a very

pleasing and graphic description of Lord Keith, who was then acting as Governor of Neuchâtel under Frederick the Great of Prussia. Rousseau was very much attached to the exiled Marishal; and from the account he gives of his Lordship's most unfrenchified ways, the literary recluse seems to have been greatly entertained.

It is not generally known that Robert Burnes, the poet's grandfather, rented the farm of Clochnahill, in the parish of Dunottar, on the estate of the Earl Marishal, about 1721, when the estate, for reasons already explained, was held by a Government tacksman. Previous to this he had occupied one of the neighbouring Kinmonth farms to the north-west of Drumlithie where he married Isabella, daughter of James Keith of Criggie, the farm adjoining Clochnahill. The presumption that there was a connection between Keith of Criggie and the Keiths, the Earls Marishal, rests on good grounds. The name

of James Keith appears in deeds drawn up and signed at Fettereso Castle, in which he is designated a "familiar servitor" of the Keiths, and he held the position of yeoman, bound to appear with his followers when summoned by the Earl Marishal. The terms on which he evidently stood with the Keiths is inexplicable on any other supposition than that he was a kinsman belonging to a collateral branch of the family. The exact nature of the relationship is not made out. It is almost certain that it was remote, probably too remote for precise definition, and something of the nature of that existing between the chief of a Highland clan and a far removed clansman. The late Dr. Rogers and some other historians of the Burnes family, make the serious blunder of confounding Keith of Criggie with the Keiths of Craig, a Forfarshire family. Through Keith of Criggie is the only clear connection between the family of Burns and the Jacobite cause. Even to that extent, the reliable evidence is not so strong as we could wish—namely, that in 1715, at the time when the Earl of Mar was assembling his supporters at Braemar, James Keith was at Aberdeen, and a bill is in existence rendered against him at that date for the equipment of a horse. That fact, taken in connection with his feudal obligation, is presumptive evidence that he was on his way to the gathering of the clans under the standard of Mar.

Previous to his settling down as a farmer, and at the time of the rising of 1715, Robert Burnes was gardener to the Earl Marishal, and was bound by the very laws of the country to follow his lord to the field; and there is strong presumptive proof that Robert Burnes, his brother George, who occupied the farm of Elhill on the Fettereso estate, and his son William, the poet's father, bore arms in the Jacobite cause—the father and uncle at Sheriffmuir, and the son at Culloden. There was a report current in Ayrshire at the time the poet's father settled in that county, that he had fought on the rebel side; and his son, in his scattered references to the subject, confirms the report. At all events, William Burnes did not leave his home till the year after the last Rebellion, and having been born in 1721, he was capable of carrying arms in

1745, and compelled to do so by the conditions under which his father leased his farms.

Having investigated the subject thus far independent of the light thrown on it by the writings of Burns, we may now take a glance at what the poet has to say on the matter. In his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, of August 2, 1787, he says:—

"My father was of the North of Scotland, the son of a farmer who, like his ancestors, had rented lands of the noble Keiths of Marishal [*i.e.*, the Keiths, Earls Marishal], and had the honour of sharing their fate. I do not use the word *honour* with any reference to political principles: *loyal* and *disloyal* I take to be merely relative terms in that ancient and formidable court, known in this country by the name of Club law, where right is always with the strongest. But those who dare welcome ruin, and shake hands with infamy, for what they sincerely believed to be the cause of God, or their king, are—as Mark Antony says of Brutus and Casius—'honourable men.' I mention this circumstance, because it threw my father on the world at large, where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom."

In language very similar to that just quoted, the poet wrote to Lady Winnifred Constable:—

"With your Ladyship I have the honour to be connected by one of the strongest and most endearing ties in the whole world. Common sufferers, in the cause of heroic loyalty! Though my father had not illustrious honours and vast properties to hazard in the contest, though they left their humble cottages only to add so many units more to the unnoted crowd that followed their leaders, yet what they could they did, and what they had they lost: with unshaken firmness and unconcealed political attachments, they shook hands with ruin for what they esteemed the cause of their king and their country. This language and the enclosed verses are for your Ladyship's eye alone. Poets are not very famous for their prudence; but as I can do nothing for a cause which is now nearly no more, I do not wish to hurt myself."

The verses enclosed were copied from those sent to William Tytler, of Woodhouselee, the defender of Mary Queen of Scots, from which we quote the following stanza:—

“ My fathers that name have revered on a throne,  
My fathers have fallen to right it ;  
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,  
That name should he scoffing slight it.”

The name the poet professes to hold in such high estimation is that of Stuart. In his poetical “Address to Edinburgh,” he says retrospectively:—

“ Ev’n I, who sing in rustic lore,  
Hap’ly my sires have left their shed  
And fac’d grim danger’s loudest roar,  
Bold following where your father’s led.”

Of nothing, evidently, was Burns more certain than that his ancestors had suffered in the cause of the Stuarts. Apparently the thought gave him considerable satisfaction ; and he does not fail to give the fact due prominence when he thinks it may redound to his credit or that of his family. Politically speaking it is here that Burns shows least to advantage ; to-day, lamenting that “There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame ;” to-morrow proposing the health of George Washington at a banquet. He passes from pole to pole of politics but remains untouched by the equatorial splendour of “Heavenly Hanoverianism.” It was the romance which even in his time attached to the personalities of the Stuart kings, and, no doubt, their misfortunes, sufferings, and heroic daring, that kindled his enthusiasm and set his heart on fire. But his intense patriotism would of itself be almost sufficient to account for his Jacobite predilections ; and, as we have shown, the conviction that he himself had suffered through his fathers having been out in the ’15 and ’45, would accentuate his feelings and give that personal tone to his Jacobite minstrelsy which must not be confounded with the mere art of the poet. It is altogether distinct, autobiographic, and in no

way related to the dramatic element so prominent in the best Scottish songs.

Our last quotation, which is also, perhaps, the most important of all as bearing directly on the subject, has not yet found its way into any life or edition of Burns. It is from the pen of Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre:—

“Burns, the poet, told me here in [the autumn of] the year 1787, that the Ayrshire clergy were in general as rank Socinians as himself. That poor man’s principles were abundantly motley—he being a Jacobite, an Arminian, and a Socinian. The first he said was owing to his grandfather having been plundered and driven out in the year 1715, when gardener to [the] Earl Marishall at Inverury ; the second to his great-grandfather, by the mother, having been shot at Airds Moss while with the Covenanters. His father, of whose sense and worth he spoke feelingly, was about to have turned Anti-burgher Seceder, when Dr. Dalrymple was settled at Ayr. He was so much pleased with that gentleman’s strain of preaching and benevolent conduct, that he embraced his religious opinions. But his son added that, for all that, he continued a Calvinist in practice, being as sober, and devout, and as attentive to the instruction of his children and servants as formerly.”

After perusing the foregoing historical and genealogical notes, the reader will not be surprised to learn that, from a list drawn up by the writer, it appears that the poet contributed in all twenty-nine songs to the Jacobite Minstrelsy. Like the “Jacobite Reliques,” they might with profit be arranged and edited in a manner to yield all the light they are capable of throwing on the character of Burns and the events and persons which he celebrates. Hogg’s volumes are not only inadequate, but, what is worse, inaccurate ; and, so far as Burns is concerned, they are as apocryphal and as useless as the Shepherd’s labours as an editor of the same poet’s works.



## XVII.—SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ELDEST SON OF THE POET BURNS.

BY HENRY KERR.

REPRINTED FROM "THE KILMARNOCK STANDARD."

THE remains of the eldest son, as is well known, were interred in the Mausoleum in St. Michael's Churchyard, by the side of his gifted father, his gentle mother (Bonnie Jean), his two other brothers, Colonel and Major Burns, and other members of the family. My recollections of the gentle and always kindly eldest son of the poet, refer to the years 1846 and 1847, when Robert, who had retired from Government employ, then resided in apartments in English Street, Dumfries, I was then a youthful retainer of the late Mr. John M'Diarmid, the able editor and proprietor of the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier*, an enthusiastic admirer of the poet, and for many years the personal friend of Mrs. Burns, the then three surviving sons, and the two blooming youthful grand-daughters, who were often the always-welcome guests of Mr. Mac. (as the gifted editor was familiarly styled), and his hospitable family in his spacious old-fashioned residence in Irish Street, the back garden of which ran down westward to the banks of the Nith. This was in 1847, and the three sons of the poet, and the blooming daughters of Colonel James Glencairn Burns, were often all staying at one time as guests of Mr. M'Diarmid. Colonel and Major Burns had spent most of their lives in military service in India, and like many old Indian officers, on their return home they took up their residence at Cheltenham. One of the two young ladies, the daughters of Colonel James Burns, whom I saw every summer as the guests of Mr. M'Diarmid, would be Mrs. Burns Hutchinson, whose statement as to the grandsons of the poet were quoted by a Manchester correspondent in a previous letter. The three sons of Burns, it is almost superfluous to say, at their deaths were interred beside the remains of their parents at the well-known Mausoleum in St. Michael's Churchyard, Dumfries.

When I first became acquainted with Robert, the eldest son of the bard, in 1846,

he had for some years been living retired on a pension, as an ex-Government official. He was then infirm and in poor health, yet his face, and the contour of his head, strongly reminded me, and I was only a boy then, of the well known engravings from Nasmyth's portrait of the poet, painted in the hey-day of his popularity. Though I have frequently seen the two other sons of the poet, on their annual visits to Mr. M'Diarmid in Dumfries, yet I was oftener brought into intimate relations with the eldest son, Robert, who was an almost nightly visitor, when he was able to move about, at Mr. Mac's house, and when unwell, which was frequently the case, I had often to see him at his lodgings with messages, books, newspapers, etc., sent up to him by his old and thoughtful friend or his family. Being then only a boy, Robert was always kind and indulgent to me, and took much interest in the books I should read. He had a fine edition of the Waverley novels in his library, as I well remember, and he told me by all means to study thoroughly the writings of Scott. He kindly lent me each volume, and introduced me to a new world, as I had hitherto never seen any of the great Wizard's matchless creations. Robert's favourite tale of Scott's was the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*. Ever since, I have never tired of Scott, and I cannot, even to this day, say which is my favourite work—the *Heart of Mid-Lothian* or *Ivanhoe*. Scott may be comparatively neglected in these latter days—more's the pity; but the rising generation, I am happy to know, are returning to the loves of their fathers and grandfathers. During my frequent visits to Robert's lodgings I received from him several valuable presents of books, and a copy of one of his own poetical pieces, entitled "A Song," a pastoral ballad. It is dated "Dumfries, January, 1848." Those who had the best knowledge of the eldest son, Robert, used to say he was a most accomplished man, an excellent linguist, the tenderest of friends, and, though most diffi-



dent where his own productions were concerned, a poet of no mean calibre. In another letter I shall, with the editor's permission, reproduce this song. I am not aware that Robert Secundus's poetical efforts have ever appeared in a collected form. Two of his songs are printed in Blackie's *Book of Scottish Song*. The first, beginning "Ha'e ye seen, in the calm, dewy morning," is most beautiful and felicitous; and the second is the "Highland Piper."

In the summer of 1847 it was my privilege to accompany the three sons of the poet, and Mr. M'Diarmid, to the farm of Ellisland, on the bosky banks of the Nith, in the parish of Dunscore, a short distance below Dalswinton. It was at Ellisland, as will be remembered, that Burns and Bonnie Jean first "set-up house" as farmers, and that "Mary in Heaven," and other well-known pieces, were written. I had visited Ellisland some years before 1847, and, if I am not mistaken, the farm was then occupied by a Mr. Taylor, then a man well up in years, and very likely the successor of Burns on the farm, which was then much in the same condition as when vacated by the poet, on the removal of himself and family to Dumfries. In my next letter I hope to have a little to say about Ellisland in the year 1847, when I last visited the place in the company of the three sons of the poet, and my employer, Mr. M'Diarmid. Let me now close with an anecdote highly illustrative of the regard of the inhabitants of Dumfries towards the memory of Burns and the surviving members of his family. As Robert was a frequent visitor to the house of Mr. M'Diarmid it was often my pleasant duty to convoy him home from Irish Street to his lodgings in English Street. One evening the old man was walking home slowly, leaning heavily on his staff, his other hand in mine, when we turned into Assembly Street, where some gossips were talking at their doors. Down the street, rapidly approaching us, was an Irishman, brimful evidently of the "cratur," and seemingly, like his typical countryman at Donnybrook, "blue moulding for a bating." Everybody almost in the town knew Mr. Burns, and as we passed they saluted him kindly. Paddy here bore down upon us, and without the least provocation struck me a

blow with his open hand which sent me spinning into the channel, and Mr. Burns was so roughly jostled that he almost fell on the pavement. While engaged hunting for the largest stone I could find to return Pat's compliment, the ladies, who had seen the wanton act, speedily came to our rescue. When I turned round I found that at least half-a-dozen voluble and strong-armed dames had effectually "gone for" Pat, and he certainly came in for a most effectual "bating" before he could disengage himself from the enemy. He then deemed discretion the better part of valour, and scoured away down the street at the double, followed by many thoroughly enraged women and men. Our further progress to English Street somewhat resembled a triumphal procession.

In the foregoing I have given some personal recollections of the long ago as to how it was my privilege, though then a mere boy, to enjoy the personal acquaintance of the kind and genial Robert Burns Secundus, the eldest son of our national poet. My personal recollections of the eldest son, Robert, refer to the years 1847-49, during which years, and up to the period of his death, the eldest son of the poet resided in lodgings in Dumfries. All the three sons of the poet, and also the widow of the poet, Mrs. Burns ("Bonnie Jean"), and other members of the family, are interred in the vault under the Mausoleum in St. Michael's Churchyard, Dumfries.

As I mentioned in a previous letter, I enjoyed the acquaintance of Robert, the eldest son of the poet, when he was residing in Dumfries in his later years, and where he was often a nightly visitor, when his infirm health permitted, of the editor and proprietor of the *Dumfries Courier*; and the hearty and hospitable Mr. Mac., as he was familiarly known to his friends, was my first employer in my salad days from 1847 to 1850. The three sons of the poet were occasionally staying at the house of the late Mr. M'Diarmid in Dumfries—Robert, the eldest son, and his brothers Colonel and Major Burns, retired Indian officers, and the two daughters of the former. The retired officers and their families—two blooming and lively young ladies in the year 1847—after long military service in

India, took up their abode at Cheltenham, a favourite "pitch" for retired Anglo-Indians, civil and military. Robert, the eldest son, retired from Government service on a pension, and he spent his later years, as I have said, in Dumfries. Mr. M'Diarmid, like most of his intelligent countrymen, was an ardent admirer of the poet Burns—of whom he possessed many relics—and was long the personal friend of the poet's universally respected widow, the "Bonnie Jean" of song, up to her demise in Burns Street—the same house, and in the same chamber, where the poet passed away in the flower of his age, and at the height of his mental powers. In the year 1847, Robert, the eldest son, must have been considerably over 60 years of age, and he was then a more or less confirmed invalid. It was my privilege in the above-mentioned year, and in the capacity of a youthful servitor, to accompany the three sons of the poet and Mr. M'Diarmid on a visit to Burns's old farm, Ellisland, a place most picturesquely situated on the bosky banks of the river Nith, a short distance below Dalswinton, and on the Dunsene side of the famous stream. At the time of our visit, in the summer of 1847, the farm of Ellisland was, I believe, in the occupation of the Taylor family, a family of farmers who had been in occupation of the farm from the time when Burns declined farming and left Ellisland to take up his residence with his family in Dumfries, where he soon after joined the majority.

In 1847, I recollect, there were not a few reminiscences of the poet at Ellisland, especially some of the existing furniture in the kitchen; the farmyard where the poet was found by his anxious wife mourning over "Mary in Heaven;" and the kitchen table, or a very similar article of furniture, on which the poet wrote out, "in a wind," so to speak, the pathetic piece after he had returned to the kitchen. A little north of the farm-house, and commanding a fine glimpse of the wooded reach of the river, was a kind of summer-house—a dormitory for gaberlunzie men and "vagrom men" of that ilk. This rustic house, as we were told by the tenant of Ellisland farm, was often requisitioned in Burns's time, and it was still used for the same purpose up to the time of our visit in

1847. The poet, we are told, often spent hours in this romantically surrounded summer house—a frail structure in the year 1847. Some of the poet's best pieces, as is well known, were written here, and within the sound of the murmuring waters of the Nith—a stream always dear to him. The sons of the poet, it need scarcely be said, lingered reverently about the place rendered famous by their gifted father, and by their loving and affectionate mother, whose memory is hallowed in the minds of all Scottish people as the "Bonnie Jean" of song, who was a gentle and faithful wife to the poet, and the most exemplary of mothers to her early orphaned children.

In one of my cherished scrap-books I have a copy of a song, given to me in the year 1848 by the eldest son. Robert Secundus, as I have previously stated, was a tasteful and feeling poet, so his most competent and intimate friends considered; but he was always too diffident, possibly in view of his father's fame, to pose as a poet, and the best of his pieces, so far as I am aware, were mostly printed for semi-private circulation amongst his most intimate friends. The piece given below, presented to me by Robert Burns, the eldest son of the poet, was evidently circulated in the same way. The only specimens of Robert Secundus' muse, so far as I am aware, are printed in the "Book of Scottish Song" (Blackie & Co.), pp. 200-201. The first song begins, "Hae ye seen in the calm dewy morning," a most beautiful piece; the second is "The Highland Piper." The title of the piece which I have so long had in my possession is "A Song;" air (composed by Neil Gow), Mrs. Weymss, of Cuttle Hills, Strathspey. It is dated "Dumfries, January, 1848." Here is the song:—

"As I gaed up the side o' Nith  
 Ae simmer morning early,  
 The gowden locks and dewy leas,  
 The broom was wavin' fairly.  
 Aloft, unseen, in cloudless sky,  
 The lark was singin' clearly,  
 When, wadin' through the broom, I spied  
 My pretty Meg, my dearie.  
 Like dawnin' light frae stormy night  
 To sailors wae and weary,  
 Sae sweet to me the glint I see  
 O' pretty Meg, my dearie !

Her lips were like a half-seen rose,  
 When day is breaking haly ;  
 Her e'en beneath her snowy brow,  
 Like rain-drops frae a lily ;  
 Like twa young dewdrops filled wi' dew,  
 They gleamed both bright and clearly ;  
 Abune them shone, o' glossy brown,  
 The locks o' Meg, my dearie.  
 Of a' the flow'rs in sunny bow'rs,  
 That bloom'd that morn sae cheery,  
 The fairest flow'r that happy hour,  
 Was pretty Meg, my dearie.

I took her by the sma', white hand,  
 My heart sprang in my bosom,  
 Upon her face sat maiden grace  
 Like sunshine on a blossom ;  
 How lovely seemed the morning hymn  
 O' ilka birdie near me,  
 But sweeter far the angel voice  
 O' pretty Meg, my dearie !

While summer light shall bless my sight,  
 An' bonny broom shall cheer me,  
 I'll ne'er forget the morn I met  
 My pretty Meg, my dearie."

The above song, so far as my recollection goes, is not one of the best efforts of Robert Burns Secundus, but it is evident that a small portion of the mantle of the gifted father descended upon his unobtrusive and gentle eldest son, whose occasional companionship, in former days, is one of my youthful sunny memories. On the 24th January last, the 134th anniversary of the birthday of our national poet was enthusiastically celebrated in every country and clime where the English language is spoken.

#### XVIII.—BURNS AS A MASON.

THE Rev. Mr. Higgins of Tarbolton, in an appendix to his admirable life of Robert Burns, writes :—Shortly before he repaired to Irvine on his flax-dressing scheme, the poet was entered, July 4, 1781, an apprentice Mason of the St. David's Lodge, Tarbolton. On October 1, 1781, he travelled from Irvine to Tarbolton (twelve miles) to be passed and raised to full Masonic brotherhood. Formerly there were in Tarbolton two lodges—the St. David's, 174, and the St. James', 178—but these had united as the St. David's in June, 1781. A year afterwards, however, this union was departed from, through Burns and others seceding and reconstituting the St. James' Lodge, whose original charter had been granted by the ancient Mother Kilwinning Lodge. It is in connection with the reorganised St. James' that the poet appears most prominently as a Mason. What keen and regular interest Burns manifested in the meetings and affairs of the brotherhood is abundantly manifest from the St. James' minute-book, a volume which the lodge has carefully preserved, and which it values highly, as containing a record of its history, and, most of all, for the fact that the book holds three minutes entirely in the bard's own handwriting, and as many as thirty minutes signed by him as Master-Depute.

The rules of the lodge are interesting reading. One is as follows :—

"Whereas, always a lodge means a company of men, worthy and circumspect, gathered together in order to promote charity, friendship, civility, and good neighbourhood ; and it is enacted that no member of this lodge shall speak slightly, detractingly, or calumniously of any of his brethren behind their backs, so as to damage them in their professions or reputations, without any certain grounds ; and any member committing such an offence must humble himself by asking on his knees the pardon of such person or persons as his folly or malice hath aggrieved. Obstinate refusal to comply with the finding of the brethren assembled shall be met by expulsion from the lodge, with every mark of ignominy and disgrace that is consistent with justice and Freemasonry."

Other regulations, dealing with such offences as the breaking of dram-glasses, attending the lodge in a state of intoxication, and so on, are very suggestive of the largely convivial nature of the meetings. Besides this precious minute-book, the Tarbolton St. James' Lodge possesses various interesting relics of Brother Robert Burns, amongst which we notice the chair and foot-stool and the miniature Mason's mallet so often used



by the poet when presiding over the lodge, the silver badge referred to in his "Farewell to the Brethren of St. James' Lodge, Tarbolton," the lodge Bible, dated 1775, and referred to in the minutes as "a new Bible, per Brother Burns, 13s.," and (carefully framed) the letter given above in fac-simile.

Some years ago Mr. Peter Watson, Annbank, Tarbolton, contributed to *The Kilmar-nock Standard* a series of articles dealing with the poet's connection with the Tarbolton Freemasons, and was at pains to have some photographs taken of several pages of the St. James' minute-book, on which the handwriting of Burns appears, as also those of Gilbert Burns and John Wilson, the Dr. Hornbook of the famous satire. Burns (says Mr. Watson) must have been the life and soul of the St. James' Lodge in more ways than one. The minutes show that there were more meetings when he was an office-bearer than at any other period. Though Burns is known to have been a member from the year 1781, it is not till 27th July, 1784, that we have the record of his appointment to a position of influence in the lodge. The Deputy-Mastership was then conferred upon him—a position that carried with it the active duties of the Grand Master, who was not very frequently present at the meetings. All assemblies at which the Master was not present were under the presidency of the Deputy-Master, and it is in this capacity that Burns has signed so many of the minutes. There are three short minutes written in full by the poet. The first is dated "Tarbolton, 1st September, 1784," but is unsigned, a circumstance not uncommon amongst the records of that time. This minute bears marks of literary conceit at any rate, the antithesis being worthy of note. It is almost ludicrous to find the world-famed poet writing this:—

"This night the lodge met and ordered four pounds of candles and one quire of eight-pence paper for the use of the lodge (which money was laid out by the treasurer, and the candles and paper laid in accordingly.)"

It is a curious coincidence that two of the three minutes written in full by Robert Burns are near to the one written in the hand

of Gilbert Burns, the three being in view at the one opening of the book. Burns, who, whether living at Lochlea or Mossgiel, must have had some miles to walk in order to attend the meetings of the lodge, was most attentive to his duties. The first minute which he signed as Deputy-Master is dated 29th June, 1785, and the last to which his name is adhibited is dated 23rd May, 1788; but this does not mark his final departure from the lodge, as Dr. Robert Chambers erroneously states in his *Land of Burns*. On 21st October, 1788, and again on 11th November of the same year, the minutes record that Brother Robert Burns was in the chair, though his signature is not attached. Both of these meetings took place at Mauchline, and they must have been held during a flying visit from Ellisland, as Burns settled there on 12th June, 1788, a letter of his, dated 13th June, stating that "this is the second day" he had been on his farm in Dumfriesshire. Between the first and the last signature, Burns has in all signed his name twenty-nine times, and on one occasion he has his initials placed to a postscript; but one of the signatures has been cut out by some unscrupulous admirer. Burns's younger brother, Gilbert, was entered, passed, and raised as a brother on 1st March, 1786 (the last date on which the poet signed Burns), and must, for a time at least, have taken an active part in the affairs of the lodge. We find Gilbert signing the minutes on five separate occasions between 11th December, 1786, and 21st December, 1787. The last references to either of the brothers occur on 18th November and 20th November, 1788, on which dates the text of the minutes states that Brother Gilbert Burns occupied the chair. These last-named meetings were held in Mauchline, and form the closing testimony to the warm interest maintained for six or seven years by Robert, and the shorter period by Gilbert, in the affairs of St. James' Lodge, Tarbolton.

Passing from the St. James' Lodge, it is well known (writes Mr. Higgins) that, until the close of his career, the poet manifested a warm interest in Freemasonry. It is easy to imagine what a charm he lent to the many meetings he attended, though it may be in



these gatherings he gave away not a few "slices of his constitution." On two occasions, during his first winter in Edinburgh, he was highly honoured by the craft—once at an important meeting, attended by the Grand Lodge of Scotland on 13th January, 1787, when the Grand Master gave the toast of "Caledonia, and Caledonia's Bard, Brother Burns," which rang through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations; and again, at a meeting of the Edinburgh Canongate (Kilwinning) Lodge, on 1st February, 1787, when, in honour of his great poetic fame, Burns was enthusiastically assumed as a member of the lodge. Then, in the "Diary of his Border Tour" there occurs, under date of 19th May, 1787, this entry: "Spent the day at Mr. Grieve's—made a Royal Arch Mason of St.

Abb's Lodge (Eyemouth)." As already remarked, the poet continued his connection with the Tarbolton St. James' for some considerable time after going to reside at Ellisland, and, from the following note of his attendance at Mason meetings in Dumfries, we learn how ardently he kept up his attachment to the brotherhood until the end:—

1791—27th Dec.	1792—30th Nov.
1792—6th Feb.	1793—30th Nov.
1792—14th May.	1794—29th Nov.
1792—31st May.	1796—28th Jan.
1792—5th June.	1796—14th April.
1792—22nd Nov.	

On 30th November, 1792, he was selected Senior Warden, and in the minutes of the sixteen meetings held during his stay in Dumfries, his name is eleven times found in the list of those who were present.

## XIX.—LINES ON THE CENTENARY OF BURNS.

JANUARY 25th, 1859.

BY MARY J. KATEMAN LAWSON.

WHERE purple hill-tops bask in light, and  
flowery vales are fair,  
Where golden broom and heath-bells deck  
"the bonnie banks of Ayr,"  
Far in the old poetic past, where misty  
memories lie,  
Beneath the frosted rime of eld, a century  
gone by,  
When shining winter mantled earth in vesture  
snowy white,  
And midnight stars together sang their songs  
of living light,  
Through the dim cloisters of the sky that  
held the coming morn  
A band of fairy voices sang, "A poet-child is  
born."

Softly the elfin' music fell in mellowed  
cadence there,  
And woke the drowsy echoes round a cottage  
home of Ayr,—  
Where the three shadowy Sisters spun strange  
web and woof of strife  
For him who slept within the hush of awful  
new-born life.

They flung the poet-mantle round—that  
strange mysterious garb,  
That hides amid its folds of light the arrow  
and the barb.  
They touched the wakening spirit then with  
fancy's radiant wand,  
And planted in immortal soil rare seeds from  
fairylond.  
Thus weaving magic circles round the cradle  
where he lay,  
In token of his heritage, the music died away.  
Years dropped into the lap of Time, the child  
became a man,  
Winning his rich inheritance despite the iron  
ban  
Of empty rank and shining gold. Superior  
to them all,  
The subtle brain, and poet heart, o'erleapt  
the potent wall.  
He proved there is no lineal claim, no birth-  
right autocrat,  
"The rank is but the guinea-stamp—a man's  
a man for a' that ;"

"By banks of Doon," "o'er barley rigs, "by  
braes of Ballochmyle,"  
He dropped the shining links of song about  
his native isle.  
Where the "wee mountain daisy" bloomed  
in white and crimson vest,  
Or by the wild romantic Loch where timid  
fowl had rest.  
He held the glass to Nature's face from folly's  
mask to free us,  
Potent as "giftie's power to see oursel's as  
ithers see us."  
He was the champion of his kind—brave  
man and gentler woman—  
Yet claimed indulgence on the plea, "to step  
aside is human."

Nature, the free, the beautiful, his parent and  
his guide,  
In moulding this, her worshipper, "no 'prentice  
hand she tried."  
Alike in days of "smiling spring," or when  
"the hay was mown,"  
In "chill November's surly blast," or "win-  
ter's angry zone,"  
He shrined all things in Nature's realm, with  
"thoughts and words that burn,"  
Learning from one the world-wide truth that  
"man was made to mourn ;"  
But oftener gathered from the flowers, the  
stream, the field, the grove,  
The better universal truth, man's watchword,  
"God is Love."

He sang old Scotia's hero sons, who roused  
them for the fray,  
With "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled"—a  
martial roundelay.  
Yet strung his harp to tender tune, with touch  
so soft and airy,  
When singing "bonnie Jean of Ayr," or gentle  
"Highland Mary."  
To gay and grave, to peer and hind, his verse  
was for the masses,  
But never fell so sweet and clear as when he  
sang "the Lasses."  
Perchance his muse too prodigal, at times  
astray was borne,  
In "Tam o' Shanter's" midnight ride, and  
bold "John Barleycorn,"  
With such a wealth of wit and power, hard  
was it to determine

Which way "the subject theme should gang,  
turn out a sang or sermon."  
Yet often rose on lofty wing, from meaner  
things away,  
When painting rural Scottish life, "The  
Cottar's Saturday."

His lays are now a nation's wealth, as house-  
hold words they seem,  
We sing them in our festal hours—through  
young love's early dream.  
The very soil is classic ground where once  
his footsteps trod,  
Still rests the shadow of his soul on Ayr's  
poetic sod.  
Still through the lapse of misty years th'  
admiring spirit turns,  
Till Scotland's old heroic soil is called "the  
Land of Burns."  
The harp that through its heathery braes  
poured forth its dulcet sound,  
Still lingers in sweet echoes there along the  
haunted ground.  
Where'er the sons of Scotia rove, o'er desert,  
field, or flood,  
Where breathes the old chivalric soul, and  
flows the patriot blood ;  
Be it upon the tented field, or sun-burned  
plains of toil,  
Or where New Scotland's Mayflower blooms  
upon this western soil—  
One touch can thrill their kindred hearts  
borne o'er the deep along,  
The charmed melody that lies in Burns's  
wealth of song,  
Still leap their hearts in ecstasy to each  
familiar air,  
Shrined in those burning words that find a  
living echo there.

Thus though a century has passed, crusting  
this hoary earth,  
Since in the midnight voices sang the poet-  
ploughman's birth ;  
Though Time athwart throne, altar, hearth,  
with untamed wing hath brushed,  
Since on the heath-clad banks of Ayr the  
singer's voice was hushed,  
Leal to his memory Scotia's sons revere the  
silent bard,  
In death more glorious than in life—he reaps  
a rich reward.

To-day in every storied town, in each fair  
 hamlet spot,  
 Where Scotchmen find a dwelling-place—and  
 say, where are they not?—  
 His radiant memory they crown with wreaths  
 of loyal fame,  
 And write upon the scroll of Time their  
 poet's deathless name.  
 Fresh from the gathering dust of age, his  
 birthright robe he wears,  
 His is no poor uncertain crown, no idle hom-  
 age theirs!  
 In him the poets all receive their legal right  
 to sway,  
 What love hath consecrated long they proudly  
 crown to-day!

It is not rank, it is not gold, nor valour's  
 armèd might,  
 That writes upon a nation's soul such char-  
 acters of light  
 As those that live in Scottish hearts, o'er  
 which their memory yearns,  
 In the sweet, stirring minstrelsy, the patriot  
 song of Burns.  
 Thus weave they now the gathered bays  
 Time's fountain borne a-down,  
 And gem with stars of pride and love the  
 fresh immortal crown  
 Of him who, lapped in slumber deep, lies  
 'mid the heather fair,  
 Beside the banks he loved so well, the  
 "bonnie banks of Ayr."

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XX.—"MY NANNIE, O."

BY ANDREW ROBERTSON, GIRVAN.

THE lamented William Scott Douglas, in his incomparable edition of the complete works of Robert Burns, observes, with reference to this song, well known as beginning with the line, "Behind yon hill where Lugar flows," that "annotators have in vain puzzled themselves to find a heroine for it. No doubt he had a living model, but it does not necessarily follow that her name must have been Nannie. The air is one of the divinest of Scotland's melodies, and the name Nannie, O, being identified with it, no versifier of taste would ever dream of composing words for it which closed otherwise than with the familiar refrain." It has, however, emerged from obscurity, on the evidence of a venerable lady, Mrs. Margaret Smith (whose maiden name was Forgie), now in her ninety-second year, and who was acquainted with Mrs. Brown of Kirkoswald, aunt of the poet, that the song was composed at the Howe part of Girvan Mains one year, on the day following the famous fair of Kirkdamdie, which Robert Burns had attended in common with a large portion of the population of Carrick. The heroine was Agnes McIlwraith, the farmer's daughter of Pinvalley, a well-known pastoral farm near the Nick of the Balloch, about five miles from the peaceful, secluded and picturesque village of Barr, in the confines of

Galloway and Ayrshire, and on the banks of the Lugar. Agnes was the reputed flower of her own and the neighbouring parishes, and that her personality was striking and lovable to a degree is witnessed by the fact that even among the crowds of stalwart manhood and the bevvies of comely femininity she engrossed the attention of Burns; but it is stated that they never spoke together, and it is not known that he ever addressed her otherwise than in this exquisitely simple, tender and untarnished Arcadian song. In its composition there is evidence of its inspiration at a time when Burns's mind was in the condition of a pure and early manhood, emancipated from the immature utterances of the boy who wrote "Handsome Nell," and not yet emerged into the whirl of passion which produced "I love my Jean."

At the social meeting of the Carrick Burns Club held at Girvan on the 25th January last the president, Mr. Wm. McCreath, than whom in Carrick is no better known gentleman imbued with greater reverence for the good influences of Burns's poetry and the beauties of Scottish literature generally, in proposing the "Immortal Memory," was particularly happy in his allusion to the poet's connection with Carrick, and his utterance is worth repeating in view of the special interest "My

Nannie, O" has in the district. He said—"It has always seemed to me that the short period Burns stayed in Carrick was probably the happiest in his whole life, and it is evident from his references to Carrick scattered throughout his poetry, that the days spent at Kirkoswald had made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. To Bruce and his connection with Carrick he frequently refers. In 'Hallowe'en' and 'Tam o' Shanter' the *dramatis personæ* are all Carrick men and women. Rab M'Graer, 'a clever, sturdy fellow,' was a cousin of the poet's mother. The very fairies belong to Carrick."

Well may the poet have left on record that he composed "My Nannie, O" before he went to Irvine, for here, we are certified, that

the influences surrounding him had all tended to fortify his better nature, to foster his best impulses, and to control and discipline his aims. It is hoped this notice may counteract the ungenial and vitiated desire which seeks to probe only for the purpose of finding out something singularly human, into the relationships of the Bard and Highland Mary, and point to a new field where no mild irregularity, far less gross trespass of social canon can be marked against his name. His fame is imperishable; let us display the hitherto unpublished certificates of his dignity, and humiliate the sources of all questionable inferences of his defection.—*Kilmarnock Standard*.

## XXI.—BURNS AS A NEWSPAPER MAN.

BY HUNTER MACCULLOCH.

From an Address delivered before the members of the King's and Queen's Counties Caledonian Club (N.Y.), January 31st, 1895.

You have just given a toast to the press, and the thought at once arises, what a famous newspaper man Burns was—although he never knew it! Many qualities go to the make-up of an all-round newspaper man—and Burns had them all!

He assigned himself to interview Death, and how well he performed his task we see in "Death and Dr. Hornbook," which he gravely inscribes "a true story." Its truth lies in its fidelity to what the Death who had charge of affairs in Tarbolton parish would say at being robbed of his victims by a certain "Jock Hornbook i' the clachan." I may mention here that Dr. Hornbook was John Wilson, a schoolmaster of Tarbolton, who sold medicines and gave advice gratis. He afterwards moved to Glasgow and became session clerk to the Gorbals, where my parents were married; and I have in my possession their marriage lines, which were filled out and signed by John Wilson, alias Dr. Hornbook.

Then there is that other notable interview to mention, that one-sided interview that Burns held with the Deil! Besides the broad humour of the rehearsal of the Deil's misdoings—with a door between them as it

were—and after warning the Deil not to expect to send a certain bardie to his black pit, as he expects to turn a corner, jinkin', and cheat him yet—then comes the master-touch of charity that uplifts the poem:—

"But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!  
Oh, wad ye tak' a thought and men'!  
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a stake.  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
Even for your sake!"

Now, another qualification that a newspaper man must have is the ability to furnish a good story—and well told. Turn again to Burns, and where will you find a better story, and better told than "Tam O'Shanter?" What splendid opportunities that inimitable story offers for display heads on the first page!—three, five, seven of them!

I turn from what Burns considered his standard performance to one which Thomas Carlyle gave the precedence to—"The Jolly Beggars." There you have a story of another sort; still a newspaper man's story. The man who produced "The Jolly Beggars" was capable of handling the cosmopolitan life of the metropolis of to-day.



One of the disagreeable duties of the newspaper man is the fearless attack he must make upon certain individuals in the community—public characters—who are abusing their place and power. Such an attack is spoken of in the slang of the newspaper office as “a roast.” Can you imagine such a duty better done than by Burns in “Holy Willie’s Prayer”? There was an artistic roast, done to a turn, by a chef—a Lexow committee of one!

Then this eighteenth century poet-journalist, Burns, could be depended upon as a leader writer, as his various epistles testify. In them he has always something to say, well said, and worth reading—wise and witty.

To sum it all up in a phrase; Burns had in a large measure that gift that insures success in life as a journalist—knowing what the people want. And in what profusion did he produce what the people still want—their thoughts expressed in their language, and signed, Robert Burns, poet!

To associate Burns in this intimate fashion with the press, may seem to some an unwarrantable liberty. To those I would say that such a charge would have been true in the time of Burns; but it is true no longer. The press of to-day is held in high esteem. As an educator of the people, it divides the honours with the pulpit—and there are many clergymen who will admit that it takes the largest share. The great success of the press is mainly due to its ability to carry out the advice of a certain advertising agent, and to keep everlastingly at it! Not preaching its

gospel one day in seven, but seven days in seven! The newspaper reaches the common people, the five who attend church and the five who stay at home. Its opportunities to mould opinion, to form character, are unsurpassed. It has a giant’s power, and its daily care should be not to misuse it. Therein lies its great temptation; the abuse of power.

I have already alluded to the watch-word of success in newspaper life: Give the people what they want. This is bound to insure financial success; while it has a constant tendency to drag its mission in the mire. This tendency must be resisted. The great problem that the press has to solve is this: How to give the people what they want, and at the same time to withhold that which is not good for them to have; adding in its place that needful sometimes with a bitter taste, which will tone up their system.

And now, in conclusion, let me add a few lines as a motto for the evening:

Behind us lies a vanished day,  
Forever gone from sight;  
However smooth or rough the way,  
And though its sky was blue or gray,  
The hours are ours, to-night!

Before us stands a hidden day,  
At morn to leap in light;  
Let not the morrow’s cares dismay,  
Its battlefield is far away,  
The hours are ours, to-night!

Then let us pass the time away  
Unto our heart’s delight;  
For when it goes, it goes for aye!  
So, sing and dance, be glad and gay.  
The hours are ours, to-night!

## XXII.—BURNS AS A LOVER OF BIRDS.

BY ARTHUR GRANT.

REPRINTED FROM “THE PEOPLE’S FRIEND.”

“Sing on, sweet Thrush, upon the leafless bough;  
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain:  
See aged Winter, ’mid his surly reign,  
At thy blithe carol clears his furrow’d brow.”

So sang Robert Burns, one hundred and one years ago, on the morning of the 25th January 1793. On that particular anniversary of his birthday, “the bright sun had gilded the

Orient skies,” and under its gladdening spell both the bird and the poet burst into song; twin immortals shall we call them, since they are linked for ever in the poet’s immortal verse. What, indeed, would the poet’s song be without the earlier “carol” of the birds? Is not the repeated reference to them in our poetry but the homage of our poets to

Nature's masters of song, whose lyrics they may strive to imitate, but never surpass? The lark's lyrical outburst of joy in the high heavens, the cushat's croon in the leafy recesses of the woods, the wild whirling whistle of the curlew on the mountain side, the owl's weird-like cry in the haunted tower, the bittern's boom of desolation over the waste places of the earth, and the sea-bird's scream on the dizzy, storm-lashed cliffs, have inspired our poets from the earliest times. Burns himself has said that he "learned his tuneful trade from every bough," and in the well-known letter of first January 1789, to Mrs. Dunlop, he exclaims—"I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a group of grey plovers in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry."

No poet has written so lovingly of the birds as Robert Burns has done. They were his life-long friends. Bitterns, blackbirds or merles, buzzards, coots, curlews, craiks, ducks and drakes, eagles and earns, gorcocks, goshawks, gowdspinks, grouse, hawks, herons, and hoodie-craws, lapwings, larks or laverocks, linnets or lintwhites, magpies, mallards, and moorfowl, owls, plovers, redbreasts, rooks, stockdoves or cushats, swallows, swans, teals, thrushes or mavis, waterfowl, woodcocks, and woodlarks, flit through his pages. Even the equivocal bat is not forgotten. We have it in the inimitable simile, "waving like the Bauckie-bird." Like Charles Lamb, he might have exclaimed, "I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding."

To the birds Burns told all his sorrows. He called on them to weep with him when he wept—"mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood"—and to rejoice with him when he was glad. He even lectured them on their rights, as in the case of the water-fowl in Loch Turret; and there wasn't a pretty girl in all the country-side but the birds knew Burns's opinion regarding her long before the song in which her charms were celebrated ever greeted her "bonny black een." In composing his poem on "Peggie," the moorcock, the partridge, plover, woodcock, heron, cushat, thrush, linnet, and swallow had a share. In his poem entitled "Menie,"

reference is made to the hawk, coot, swan, ducklings, and the lark; whilst the cushats, the lintwhites, the craik, the "paitrick," and "the swallow jinkin' round my shiel," amuse Bess at her spinning wheel. Every one knows, too, the verse in that most beautiful of songs, "Afton Water," in which Burns addresses the birds,

"Thou stockdove whose echo resounds thro' the  
glen,  
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,  
Thou green-crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,  
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair."

In another poem he pleads for the clothing of the banks of Bruar Water with trees, pointing out that many a grateful bird would return its tuneful thanks, to wit, "the sober laverock warbling wild," the gowdspink, Music's gayest child,"

"The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,  
The mavis mild and mellow;  
The robin pensive autumn cheer  
In all her locks of yellow."

It would seem as if Burns could not mention the favourites of his woodland choir often enough. He brings them into his poems or songs on every possible occasion. Perhaps the most striking example of all is the elegy on Captain Henderson. As an elegy, the poem is almost overweighted with his all-embracing love for Nature and "Nature's sturdiest bairns." How tenderly he refers to them. "Three lines from his hand," says Carlyle, "and we have a likeness." Here, in a little word picture of a single line, he hits off the characteristics of each.

"Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;  
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;  
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud;  
Ye whistling plover;  
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood;  
He's gane for ever!

"Mourn, sooty coots and speckled teals;  
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;  
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels  
Circling the lake;  
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,  
Rair for his sake.

"Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day  
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;  
And when ye wing your annual way  
Frae our cauld shore,  
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay  
Wham we deplore.

"Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r  
In some auld tree, or eidritch tow'r,  
What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r,  
Sets up her horn,  
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour  
Till waukrife morn!"

This tendency to catalogue the birds may have been suggested by the practice of the earlier poets, as, for example, the well-known passage in Montgomery's "Cherry and the Slae," in which we see a faint suggestion of Burns:—

"The cushat crouds, the corbie cries,  
The cuckoo couks, the prattling pyes  
To geck there they begin  
The jargon of the jangling jays,  
The creaking craws and keckling kays  
They deave't me with their din."

Apart from this conceit the references in Burns are often very beautiful as well as true to nature. Take his references to the skylark. He has not presented us with a sustained poem on the lark, as Hogg, Shelley, and Wordsworth have done. His references to the lark are incidental, like Shakespeare's, in the serenade in *Cymbeline*:—

"Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings;  
And Phœbus 'gins arise,"

or in one of his sonnets—

"Haply I think on thee; and then my state,  
Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate."

(By the way, Shakespeare's contemporary, John Lyly, uses almost the same language with reference to the lark in his play of *Campaspe*, written at an earlier date than either *Cymbeline* or the *Sonnets*:—

"At heaven's gate she claps her wings,  
The morn not waking till she sings.")

Like the above quotations, too, Burns's best references to the lark are in connection with the dawn. Here are a few examples culled from his poems, beginning with the gem picked out from the poem addressed, "To a Mountain Daisy"—

(1.) "Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,  
The bonnie lark, companion meet!  
Bending thee, 'mong the dewy weat!  
Wi' speckl'd breast,  
When upward-springing, blithe to greet  
The purpling east."

(2.) "Now, lav'rocks wake the merry morn  
Aloft on dewy wing."

(3.) "And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,  
Blithe waukens by the daisy's side."

(4.) "The lav'rock in the morning she'll rise frae her  
nest,  
And mount to the air with the dew on her  
breast."

(5.) "The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs  
And climbs the early sky,  
Winnowing blithe her dewy wings  
In morning's rosy eye."

In two of these quotations we have the linking of the lark with the daisy, and in four of them the picture of the lark shaking the dew from its wings or breast as it climbs the sky to welcome the dawn, recalling the lines of the cavalier poet-laureate, Sir William Davenant—

"The lark now leaves his watery nest,  
And climbing shakes her dewy wings."

The cushat is also a favourite with Robert Burns. Its cry, more than the note of any other bird, saving perhaps the cuckoo, seems to be infused into our poetry. It is a wail, just as our old Ballad poetry is a wail. To hear the cushat by the side of the Tweed is to hear, hushed and softened by the lapse of centuries, the echo of many a Border battle cry, the refrain of many a tale of dule and sorrow. You find the idea beautifully expressed in Shairp's "Bush Aboon Traquair," where he

"—heard the cushies croon  
Through the gowden afternoon,  
And the Quair burn singing down to the Vale o'  
Tweed."

We have it also in Burns—

"While through the braes the cushat croods  
With wailfu' cry!"

And again, echoing Montgomery, he writes—

"On lofty aiks the cushats wail,  
And echo cons the doolfu' tale."

The owl, too, is pre-eminently a poet's bird, and has gained an honoured place in English literature. Shakespeare talks of his *merry* note, but he is generally described as moping in some "ivy-mantled tower" and *hooting at the moon*. In Gray's *Elegy* we have the typical owl of poetry.



"Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower  
The moping owl does to the moon complain, etc."

And Burns, in his beautiful and eerie poem entitled "A Vision," introduces this conventional owl—

"Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,  
And tells the midnight moon her care."

But when there is no moon to complain to, Satan seems to take the idler in hand. The Scotch howlet then becomes more weird-like, more uncanny. He "forgathers" with bogles and warlocks. He is the *genius loci* of "eldritch towers" and "haunted biggins," as Tam o' Shanter knew full well.

"Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,  
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry."

What a meaning is conveyed in the couplet—

"By some auld houlet-haunted biggin',  
Or kirk deserted by its riggin'!"

No respectable English owl, that like Endymion coquetted with the moon, would think of taking up such quarters, and none but a Tam o' Shanter or a Captain Grose would dare pass such a place after nightfall.

We come now to some of the references in Burns's poetry which bring out more particularly his intense sympathy for the birds. "Not man only," says Thomas Carlyle, "but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: 'the hoary hawthorn,' the 'troop of grey plover,' the 'solitary curlew,' all are dear to him; all live in this earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood." His warm, impulsive heart feels for them at all times and seasons.

"The hawthorn I will pu', wi' its locks o' siller grey,  
But the songster's nest within the bush I winna tak' away."

Their helpless appearance in winter time calls forth his special sympathy. During one of those snow storms which he describes so grandly in "A Winter Night," when even the steeples rock, he thinks of the "owrie cattle," and then turns to his birds.

"The happing bird, wee, helpless thing,  
That in the merry months o' spring  
Delighted me to hear thee sing,

What comes o' thee?  
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chattering wing  
And close thy e'e?"

That expressive word "chattering," with its suggestion of homeless and ill-clad waifs when the bitter east winds are blowing, Burns uses in another poem with like effect—

"The birds sit chattering in the thorn,  
A' day they fare but sparely."

When a good old sportsman, Tam Samson, of Kilmarnock, died, our poet pictured the rejoicings of Tam's natural enemies by flood and field—the partridges, the moorcocks, and the hares.

"Rejoice, ye birring pairtricks a';  
Ye cootie muircocks crouselly craw!  
Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,  
Withouten dread:  
Your mortal fae is now awa',  
Tam Samson's dead."

(Excuse the intrusion of puss among the birds. The line is irresistible. Next to the birds, Burns had a warm corner left in his heart for the hare). At another time Burns unintentionally scared some waterfowl in Loch Turret, and he thus remonstrates with them for forsaking their watery haunts on his approach:—

"Why, ye tenants of the lake,  
For me your watery haunts forsake  
Tell me, fellow-creatures why  
At my presence thus you fly?  
Why disturb your social joys,  
Parent, filial, kindred ties?  
Common friend to you and me,  
Nature's gifts to all are free:  
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,  
Busy feed, or wanton lave;  
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,  
Bide the surging billows shock."

Even at the shooting season his sympathy, one would fancy, was all with the game, so lovingly does he describe "a bonnie moorhen," and so elated is he at her escape, when "whirr! she was over, a mile at a flight."

"Sweet brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,

Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells;  
Her plumage outlustr'd the pride o' the spring,  
And, O! as she wantoned gay on the wing,  
I red you beware at the hunting young men;  
I red you beware at the hunting, young men;  
Tak' some on the wing, and some as they spring,  
But cannily steal on a bonnie moor-hen."

The above verse from Burns's Hunting Song reminds one of his amusing account of a poaching affair and its "extenuating circumstances." It occurs in one of his Epistles



to "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine."  
 "Lately in his fun," he brought a "paitrick  
 to the grun', a bonnie hen."

"The poor wee thing was little hurt ;  
*I straiikit it a wee for sport,*  
 Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash me for't  
     But deil-ma-care !  
 Somebody tells the poacher-court  
     The hale affair."

"Twas needless to explain in his defence—

"'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,  
 But twa-three draps about the wame,  
     Scarce thro' the feathers."

The deed was done, and Burns had evidently to pay in fine "a yellow George," and "thole their blethers." Burns, however, was not the first great poet that was thus caught red-handed. Had not Shakespeare to leave Stratford on account of a difference of opinion, to put it mildly, between Sir Thomas Lucy and himself regarding the proprietary rights in the deer of Charlecote Park?

Loving birds as Burns did, we do not wonder that he adopted for his crest "a woodlark perching on a sprig of bay tree," with the motto "Wood-notes wild;" and that in his letters he frequently compares himself and others with some of his feathered favourites. One young lady he enthusiastically describes as "a clean-shankit, straight, tight, weel-far'd winch, as blythe's a lintwhite on a flowerie thorn;" and of another he writes—"Miss flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mounting lark in an April morning." Himself he describes as "an old hawk," and talks of sitting in a lonely inn "as grave and as stupid as an owl, but like that owl, still faithful to my old song." In a rhyming epistle to Creech the bookseller, he writes of himself—

"Poor Burns ! e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,  
 He cheeps like some bewildered chicken  
 Scar'd frae its minnie and the cleckin'  
     By hoodie-craw ;  
 Grief's gi'en his heart an unco kicken',  
     Willie's awa' !"

Burns goes further even than mere compassion. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, he humorously expresses a doubt as to whether it would not have been better for him to have been "a rook or a magpie at once" than a poet, "*not to mention barn door cocks or mallards, creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time.*" Surely Burns's love could not have been expressed more forcibly than in these words. Think what our Scottish literature would have lost had Burns been born "a barn door cock !"

Amid all his vicissitudes the birds had cheered him, and there were times, as we all know, when he sorely needed encouragement, after his visit to Edinburgh, for instance, with its bitter reflections of what might have been. Even in these last sad years, when the nation thought they had amply repaid their greatest poet with a petty officership in the Excise, and the prospect of a promotion which never came, even then he could still linger by the way to listen to the thrush's song, as in that birthday sonnet of 1793. We began this paper by quoting its opening lines. We close it by quoting the thoughts which that thrush's song suggested to him, noting how, amid all the troubles which were overwhelming Burns at that time, he could still, to use his own words, "look around on all Nature, and through Nature, up to Nature's God."

"I thank thee, Author of this opening day,  
 Thou whose bright sun now gilds the orient skies,  
 Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,  
 What wealth could never give nor take away."

### XXIII.—SCOTLAND'S NEW PATRON SAINT.

*From "The Scotsman," January 25, 1892.*

It is hardly to be expected of the Presbyterian Scot that he should pay much attention to Saints' days, seeing that the time is not so far gone when his ecclesiastical superiors regarded any respect paid even to the Christmas festival as savouring of Popery. Any

consideration, therefore, for the day of his own patron saint is not to be looked for ; St. Andrew's Day may be all very well for the Scot abroad, who, with his change of country, has too frequently earned the ugly fame of forgetting his godly upbringing ; but to the

Scot at home, the patron saint is no longer St. Andrew but Robbie Burns. To go no further abroad than London, one has only to look over the programmes of their annual musical festivals on St. Andrew's Day to find out how completely the saint has been eclipsed and sacrificed to the apotheosis of the singer. And yet it is to be accounted for. In the first place, to speak without disrespect of the saint, and without exaggeration of the singer, no poet ever lived who lifted the true patriotic fervour of his fellow-countrymen to a holier height than Burns. Add to this love of his country the intense love of his kind, which runs like a thread of gold through all the best he has produced, and we have the open secret of his world-wide influence. Other men may surpass him in other aspects of the poet's power, but in this respect Burns stands out alone and unapproached. In proof of this fact, one can say of Burns what could not be said of any other poet. In every continent and quarter of the globe, and far beyond our own dependencies; in Africa, from Egypt to the Cape; in India, from the Punjab to the mouth of the Ganges; in Australia and New Zealand, and the Oceania of the Pacific; in America, over the length and breadth of the land, from New York to San Francisco, from the fur-hunter's fireside in ice-bound Labrador, down to the palms and cedars of "the still vex'd Bermoothes"—wherever, in short, the Scot—and we may almost say the Briton—has pitched his tent, as certain as the anniversary of his birth comes round, the genius of Burns reasserts itself, and for the time being his words take wing, and, Ariel-like, "put a girdle round the earth." Of what poet that ever lived can we say as much? Such is the power of genius in the employment of two of its highest and holiest instincts, the love of its country and the love of its kind.

It is by no means an unsatisfactory reflection on such a day to think that our two greatest countrymen, Burns and Scott, though each of them were men of great intellectual power, are held in highest regard for what came from their hearts. Without under-rating the intellectual gift, it is, after all, more by reason of the kindness, the generosity, and, in short, the boundless humanity of

these great natures that the world has so grappled them to its heart with hooks of steel. The essential quality of Burns's poetical gift—the lyrical—is doubtless another contributory source of his universal appreciation. The bird that sings because it must is indeed rare, although the laureate has made us all familiar with the phrase; and when it does arrive, the world perforce must stand and listen. We of the Victorian era have had to listen often to a kind of poetry not to be understood without careful study, and as to which the expositor and interpreter has, with many, become a necessity; and even with their assistance some of it still remains so enigmatical amongst intelligent people as to provoke a protest somewhat akin to Falstaff's appeal to ancient Pistol. "If thou hast any tidings, prithee deliver them like a man of this world." Now, on the other hand, there is no mistaking what the late Mr. Arnold felicitously called "the lyrical cry." There is no need of exposition or interpretation. The lyrical gift is so essentially that part of the poet's endowment which is born, and not made, that the arrows of its song go straight to the centre. Its place and power is as well marked in music when the true bird sings as it is in poetry. The lyrical gems of Burns, like the melodies of Schubert, dispense with the interpreter, and possess the "open sesame" to all hearts, deep-moving, far-reaching, awakening every faculty to new life, and fulfilling, as nothing else fulfils, the Orphic myth, in

"Strains that might create a soul  
Under the ribs of death."

Amongst all the merry meetings, the happy handshakings, and the right good-willy waughtings that accompany the anniversary of the poet's birth, the greatness of the man himself, and the place he occupied in the literature of his epoch, are apt to be overlooked. All art is more or less the mirror of the age in which it is produced, and the art of Burns is no exception to the rule. He lived in an era historically characterised by wild and almost passionate unrest, an era which culminated in that terrible upheaval, the French Revolution. Arriving at manhood, he was in the middle of the strange and unaccountable hallucination of the period

and he did not escape the prevailing fever. He did not conceal his sympathy with the movement in the letter, and in the spirit the marks of it are left in the frequent and fierce declarations of his independence, his attacks on civil and religious tyranny in every shape, and the merciless satire with which he scourges the hollow theology of his time.

The effect of that yearning after the unattainable, resulting in the Revolution, brought with it a remarkable change in the literature of the time, a change in which Burns was one of the earliest representatives. The days of Grub Street pastorals were at an end, and here was one that, if he painted at all, must paint from Nature, even if the subject were as humble as a daisy or a field mouse. Thomson met the movement half way, but Burns was the first to leave the moorings of the effete classicism of his century, and lead the way into the fresh woods and pastures new of the School of Modern Romance, and that by the sheer force of his simple and direct humanity, and the whole-heartedness of his unsophisticated passion. It may not be quite right to put to one man's account all the credit of so important, and, as the Germans would say, so epoch-making a movement, but certain it is that Burns was at the dawn of that great revival. His hand it was, more than that of any other man in the century, which rolled back the stone and opened the celestial gate, that *Porta Speciosa* through which passed after him the great men upon whom, as far as

poetry is concerned, the nineteenth century may safely rest an abiding claim, Wordsworth, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, and Keats. Notwithstanding the greatness of our national bard, and the world-wide appreciation of his works, the anniversary of his birth might not be considered quite complete without here and there the usual head-shakings over the defects of what, in the language of theology, is called "the natural man." The day affords an irresistible opportunity to improve the occasion for those creatures whose wallowing delight it is to stir up the dead ashes of original sin, that insoluble residuum of which we are all more or less the unfortunate legatees, and without which the moralist's occupation would be gone. Without interfering with the trade by which the professional censor wins his bread, it may be hinted that in Burns's case the performance is getting a little stale. The time is surely come, after a man has been in his grave for nearly a hundred years, that the occupation of these moral vampires should be discountenanced. When some one reminded Bolingbroke of the faults of his political opponent, Marlborough, he replied, "Yes, I know he had faults, but he was so great a man that I forget what they were." To those who still refuse this generous view, we can only offer another alternative. Let them henceforth be numbered among those whom Mr. Andrew Lang has humorously classified under the generic heading of "Burns's blethering bitches."

#### XXIV.—WHY BURNS IS MORE POPULAR THAN SCOTT WITH THE MASSES.

*By the Rev. GEORGE GILFILLAN.*

MRS. STOWE, in her *Sunny Memories*, notices that, at the public meetings held in Scotland in her honour in 1853, any allusion made to Burns brought down the house, while Scott's name was received rather coldly. We may supply some reasons for what seems to have puzzled her considerably. In the first place, Mrs. Stowe's admirers—and we state it in her honour, not in her disparagement—belonged principally to the people, the very

class among whom Burns is most highly admired; the upper classes were not so fully represented at her gatherings, and they in general prefer Scott to Burns. Secondly, there is a feeling very prevalent in Scotland that Burns was a shamefully used man; that his treatment at the hands of the nobility, and middle-class, too, of his time led to much of his misery and reckless conduct; and that his country had contracted a debt



to his memory which must be publicly and in the amplest measure discharged. Every rapturous cheer Mrs. Stowe heard at her meetings, when the name of Burns was pronounced, was a separate instalment in the clearance of that debt; and it seemed entirely liquidated on the memorable 25th of January, 1859. Scott, on the other hand, had been for the greater part of his life a prosperous country gentleman, and, so far as money was concerned, had received his reward. His misfortunes afterwards were to a great extent the result of his own extravagance and ambition. Ebenezer Elliott says of the Scotch people and Burns :

“They gave him more than gold,  
They read the brave man's book.”

But the people of Scotland, England, and the

world, read Scott, and gave him gold besides. Thirdly, there was lingering in 1853, and lingers still, a certain prejudice, partly political and partly religious, against Scott, founded on his Tory principles, and on his treatment of the Covenanters. That this prejudice has to a great extent subsided since, we fondly believe; but it is not entirely gone. Burns, on the contrary, although sometimes profane enough, was a Radical in politics; and his “Cottar's Saturday Night,” like charity, covered a multitude of sins. Hence nothing will shake him in the estimation of his countrymen. While admitting Scott's general superiority, they trace it partly to his happier circumstances and greater success, and determinedly hold to it that Burns is the representative poet of his nation.

## XXV.—THE MEMORY OF BURNS—A BRIEF TRIBUTE FROM HIS COUNTRYMEN AND ADMIRERS IN BELFAST.

From the *Northern Whig*, Sept. 20, 1893.

“Nor skilled one flame alone to fan;  
His country's high-souled peasantry  
What patriot pride he taught!—how much  
To weigh the inborn worth of man!  
And rustic life and poverty  
Grow beautiful beneath his touch.”

To honour the illustrious dead and perpetuate their memory is surely one of the most sacred duties which devolve upon a people, and neglect of this duty has ever and rightly been regarded as the premonitory indications of national decay. The race that has learned to forget those whose names are linked with all that is great and glorious in their history may not complain if the world soon learns to forget them. And it is surely a beautiful trait in the character of a people, this clinging to the memory of forefathers “great and good,” whose life work has shed an enduring lustre upon their country and name. Scotland sets a noble example to the world in this respect. It would be difficult to find a people more jealous of the reputation of those who are “known to fame” in the annals of their race. One of the first things that attract the attention and curiosity of those who visit Scotland for the first time is the multitude of monuments which stud the

prominent thoroughfares of its principal towns and cities. True, they are not all associated with the names of notable Scotchmen, but it would be difficult, if at all possible, to mention the name of any Scotchman of historical repute who has not been honoured by the erection of some such memorial of pride and affection. But it is to the memory of Burns that the Scottish heart clings with fondest tenacity. Turn where one will he finds something to remind him of the humble “Ayrshire Ploughman,”

“Who more of Fame's immortal dower  
Unto his country brings  
Than all her kings.”

The genius of Burns has always exercised an undisputed sway over the heart of Scotland, and time seems only to strengthen rather than diminish its influence. Burns spoke to the heart of her people, and that heart still throbs in responsive sympathy to the music of his tongue. He sang not of the glories of kingly courts or lordly halls, but of the dignity of the lowly and the nobility of honest toil. Among peasant poets he stands among the foremost, and the humble and toil worn of every generation, acknowledging a common



lineage with their national bard, find in him a potent advocate and a loyal brother. As has been truly said, "His lyre is wreathed with wild flowers. Its tones are simple and glowing. Their music is like the cordial breeze of his native hills. It still cheers the banquet and gives expression to the lover's thoughts. Its pensive melody has a twilight sweetness; its tender ardour is melting as the sunbeams. Around the cottage and the moor, the scene of humble affection, the site of lowly piety, it has thrown a hallowed influence which embalms the memory of Burns in the hearts of mankind." Scotland's noblest son of song is the proud title by which he is and will be known to future generations, and it is safe to prophesy that while Bonnie Scotland has a tongue his praises will be sung and his memory kept green.

It would be passing strange therefore if in this city, where so many sons of Scotland have found a home, Burns should be unremembered. But it is not so. The existence of the Burns Club is proof to the contrary, and we have besides innumerable other evidences of how large a place Burns fills in the hearts of Scotchmen resident in Belfast. The Burns Club was established in 1872 to cherish the genius of the poet, and in that direction it has been eminently successful. The anniversary of Burns is also fittingly commemorated each year, and on these occasions there is no lack of enthusiasm in doing honour to his memory. While upon this point, we might mention that, besides the Burns Club, the other Scottish societies which at present exist in Belfast, work under the disadvantage of holding their meetings in different parts of the city, and their members have long felt the want of a suitable building in which the business of each society could be carried on under one roof. The establishment of a Scottish Institute in Belfast would solve the difficulty, and we are not without hope that something in this direction will be accomplished in the comparatively near future.

We have said that the memory of Burns is kept very much alive amongst Scotchmen resident in Belfast, and we are happy to be in a position to record an eloquent evidence of the accuracy of our statement. Yesterday

we had the privilege of viewing a statue in bronze of the gifted poet, which has been placed in the Art Gallery of the Free Library as "A tribute to the memory of Burns from his countrymen and admirers in Belfast." The statue, which occupies a prominent position in Room C of the Library, is a model of the colossal statue in Ayr, which was executed by Mr. George A. Lawson, H.S.R.A., the eminent Edinburgh sculptor. The statue follows the lines of the famous Nasmyth portrait, and is acknowledged to be the most life-like realisation of the immortal bard that the world has yet received. It stands upon a pedestal of Peterhead granite, the whole being about seven feet in height. The pedestal bears the following inscription:—

"Robert Burns,

1759-1796.

Presented by his countrymen and admirers in Belfast."

Accompanying the statue, mounted on screens, and placed in a semi-circle, are a number of appropriate photographs and engravings, some of which are very valuable and rare. One of the most interesting of these is perhaps a portrait of the bronze statue of Burns in Washington Park, by Charles Calverley, the New York sculptor. This is the gift of a Scotswoman, the late Miss Mary M'Pherson, known as "the M'Pherson legacy to the city of Albany." This statue is considered to be one of the finest that has been erected to Burns. Accompanying the photograph are the four bas-reliefs on the pedestal of the Albany monument, representing "Burns at the Plough," "Tam o'Shanter," "Auld Lang Syne," and "The Cotter's Saturday Night," which illustrates some of the best of Burns's serious compositions. These magnificent photographs were very kindly sent by Mr. Peter Kinnear, a resident in Belfast forty-eight years ago, and the executor of the M'Pherson estate. The other views are all extremely interesting, and will attract only less attention than the statue itself, which, we may mention, represents the poet reciting his celebrated poem, "A man's a man for a' that." It may be of interest to mention that numerous editions of the poems of Burns were at one time or another published in

Belfast. The second edition of "Burns's Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect," was published by William Creech, Edinburgh, in 1787. From this several incorrect editions were printed in London and Belfast with many misprints. Among the rest, in the "Address to a Haggis," the word "skinking" (watery) was printed "stinking," hence the Belfast edition was called "The stinking edition." An interesting volume on Burns was issued in Belfast, in 1878, by the late Mr. Robert Jamieson, entitled—"Burns in his Youth, and how he grew to be a Poet." "Burns in his Maturity, and how he spent it." These were papers read by Mr. Jamieson before the Belfast Burns Club in 1876-7. The first edition of Burns's poems was published in Kilmarnock over a hundred years ago. The original price of the volume was three shillings; at the present moment a really perfect copy of this scarce volume would probably fetch two hundred pounds to its fortunate owner. Since the date of the first edition thousands of books have been published on Burns, including editions of his works which can be counted in hundreds, from those in pamphlet form hawked by "chapman billies" to the costly *éditions de luxe*. It is most desirable that there should be a complete set of the Belfast editions of Burns's poems for the Free Library, and we

hope soon to see a good collection of copies and Burns relics adorning "a poet's corner" in the Library. We may add that the gratitude of all Scotchmen is due to Mr. James Dewar, the hon. secretary of the Belfast Benevolent Society of St. Andrew, upon whom devolved the burden of the work in connection with the project of securing the Burns statue for the Free Library. It is alike a worthy tribute to the memory of Scotland's immortal son, and a credit to the Scotchmen who, though separated from their native land, still fervently cherish the memory of her national bard.

Amongst the numerous visitors to the Library to view the statue yesterday were—Mr. William Brown, Mr. and Mrs. J. Bryden, Mr. and Mrs. James Crawford, Mr. Andrew Doig, Mr. James Dewar, Mr. Lavens M. Ewart, Mr. I. Fraser, Mr. Vere Foster, Mr. and Mrs. John Gordon, Mr. James Henderson, J.P.; Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Kirkwood, Mrs. D. Keay, Mrs. Evans, Mr. and Mrs. D. D. Leitch, Mr. S. Shaw, Mr. William C. Mitchell, J.P.; Mr. R. A. Mitchell, Mr. H. Macnamara, Mr. T. Ralph, Mr. J. L. Russell, Mr. William Robertson, J.P., and Mrs. Robertson; Mr. D. Steel, Mr. John Vyncomb, Mrs. W. Watson, Mr. James Jenkins, Mr. William Weir, Mr. W. Clark, and Mr. A. M. Blackhall.

## XXVI.—A POET OF THE PEOPLE.

*By the REV. DR. COURT.*

An Address delivered before the Lowell (Mass.), Caledonian Club, January 25th, 1893.

WHY do you hold in such high honour the memory of Robert Burns? Every intelligent Scotchman should be able to answer that question, in some reasonable way. Do we, Scots, really worship we "know not what?" Can we explain or justify our enthusiasm in regard to this Ayrshire ploughman, who was born in a clay hut, who fed on oatmeal, wore "hodden gray," toiled in penury, and died in debt? What was he more than many another Scottish peasant? Why do we persist, year after year, in every region of the globe, in celebrating this man's birth? Were I permitted to answer I would say that

we meet to celebrate the coming into this world of Robert Burns because he was a true poet, an ardent patriot, a sound moralist and a religious soul.

Burns was a poet. There is beauty in everything, but not every one has eyes to see it, or, even, when able to see it, has the power of representing it to the minds of others. The painter and the poet reproduce the perished scenes of beauty, for other minds to ponder, to admire, to be thrilled by. This they do in virtue of the subtle laws of association. As another poet sings,

" Music, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory ;  
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken."

Now, the sights and sounds of nature and of human life will live again more vividly, will be reproduced more distinctly, the more clearly and correctly they are perceived and noticed and noted by the observant mind, and the more that mind feels and longs to express the sense of their beauty. But rarely does mere nature entrance the soul. It is nature as affected by the magic of human emotion that most pleases and most touches us. The beautiful in the outward world is linked, in memory, with human feelings, thoughts and aspirations.

Thus to represent nature, to touch the heart, is poetry's highest work, the highest art of the poet. The poet's soul is not to be a mere mirror of what is outward to his soul—smooth as glass, correct in reflective representation, and as cold as a glassy mirror must be; but rather must the poet transfigure and glorify nature with his imperial, creative imagination, and suffuse it with the rainbow-like radiance of his emotions, as feeling furnishes the drops that genius illuminates and adorns.

Such a poet was Burns. Ardent in his emotions, quick and fine in his sensibilities, he had a soul that thrilled with ecstasy when sympathizing with nature in all her moods, whether in sunshine or in shadow, in calm or in storm, in her softer or in her more rugged aspects; while his inner ear caught the under current of nature's song, as if he felt that all things were pervaded by a living spirit, sung what he felt, warbling back to nature a music sweeter than her own, and leaving his brothers and sisters of the same great family strains of poetic melody that the world refuses to let die.

What is it that is beautiful in this beautiful world of ours, so far as his native land could show it that Burns has not reproduced in his deathless verse? The daisy, the rippling brook, the waving branch, the golden field of autumn, the river rolling to the sea, the angry blast, the howling storm; all, all, conveyed to his mind images of loveliness or of sublimity, which his soul, like a true mirror, reflected in his poetry as distinct pictures of

what he beheld. Is it not a boon to have around us the beautiful, and within us the taste that delights in the beautiful? What a blessing is it to see the beautiful with a poet's eye! What a benefit it is to those who have not the poet's or the painter's eye, to have one who saw, felt and enjoyed the vision of the beautiful, who sang it for his less gifted brothers and sisters, in strains so lovely that one cannot help hearing, and thus share by hearing, the poet's own delight!

What a gamut of notes rings out from the rustic harp of this poet of the people, this singer of the beautiful! Tennyson and Longfellow deign to borrow jewelry from Burns to make their own verses shine. The ploughman is the poetic teacher of these cultured bards.

Hear his mellifluous lines and judge:—

" As in the bosom of the stream  
The moonbeam dwells at dewy eve,  
So trembling, pure was infant love  
Within the breast o' Jean."

Now compare the lines of Longfellow:—

" The moon and its broken reflection  
And its shadows shall appear  
As the symbol of love in heaven  
And its wavering image here."

Burns, in his "Hallowe'en," has an exquisitely beautiful description of a brook. Alfred Tennyson, in his far-famed "Brook," has reproduced every feature and every image in the lines of the earlier bard on the Scottish "burn." Both of these cultured singers—two of the most polished poets of this century—have given their homage to our Burns. When the Glasgow statue to Burns was unveiled, Tennyson wrote to the committee inviting him to be present that in admiration of Burns he was a Scotchman. And it is Longfellow that thus sings of our darling Scottish poet:—

" Touched by his hand, the wayside weed  
Becomes a flower; the lowliest reed  
Beside the stream  
Is clothed with beauty; gorse and grass  
And heather, where his footsteps pass  
The brighter seem."

The greatest of poets are gifted with humour—that genial, loving spirit that makes even the ludicrous aspects of life to be delightful to us, and that excites the hearty laugh that hurts nobody but inclines us to



like the objects that have occasioned it. Shakespeare overflows with it. So does Burns, and so far, as well as in the field of the beautiful and the pathetic, he is truly Shakespearian. How unctuous with the kindly spirit of honest mirth are "Tam O' Shanter," the "Jolly Beggars," "Death and Dr. Hornbook," the "Twa Dogs," and others of his merrier effusions!

The true poet has ever a loving heart. He delights in what is loveable as well as in what is lovely. A malignant poet is like a fallen angel—a demon—fallen from his high estate, recreant to duty, false to his original endowment. Burns was true to the poet's vocation. His was the "love of love." The "hate of hate" that burned in his soul was hatred of the mean, the false, the cruel, and malignant. Love was "his lord and king." Love swelled his noble heart even when indignation fired his tongue.

Burns had a heart big enough to love every living thing. The timid mouse, quivering at his foot, the birds "chittering" on the icy branches, the hare wounded by the cruel hunter, the "ourie cattle" exposed to the wintry storm, the farmer's "Auld Mare Maggie," the dogs that shared their masters' joys and sorrows, the "o'er labouring wight" drudging for a pittance, the beggars-outcasts from decency, and even the evil one himself, are all pitied and kindly dealt with in the poetry of Robert Burns. The Scots are grand haters—manly in that as in all else; but it needed Robert Burns to show the world the width and the worth of a Scotsman's love. Others have shown it in other ways—Chalmers in raising the city poor, Carlyle in his prophet like denunciations, Livingstone in missions, Simpson in medicine, and many another noble philanthropist. The Bible and Burns have taught us Scots to love and do good to every living creature of God.

Home was dear to this poet of ours. He sang of the Cottar and his fireside. His own wife was ever his true sweetheart. His children were the dearest things he had on earth. Surely one with such a soul was, indeed, a true poet.

Burns was a patriot. He loved Scotland—that

"Caledonian, stern and wild,  
Meet nurse for a poetic child."

For "puir auld Scotland's sake" he would have given twenty lives, if he had had them. Her heroes were "the gods of his idolatry." To him Wallace and Bruce were as stars of glory in a dark night. Theirs was the spirit that thrilled his manly being, and inspired that grandest of patriotic odes—"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled." To its echoes every true Scottish heart responds. To its influence is owing the fact that Scots in every land are ever ready to do or die for freedom. Scottish patriotism teaches us to respect the institutions of this free land; and the sentiments expressed by Burns have caused us to link in indissoluble remembrance the names of Wallace and Washington, as the bravest, purest, best beloved of freedom's warriors.

Burns was a moralist. As such he holds the highest rank. He saw and measured life with reason's open eye. To him things appeared as they really existed. Though he lived in a land and age in which king-given titles were adored he saw "the birkie ca'd a lord," bedizened and bedecked with star and garter, as "but a coof for a' that." Where wealth was power, he saw the mean man of riches as only one to be despised with his wretched "nieve-fu' of a soul." Where hypocrisy assumed the robes of holiness he saw through the disguise and held up "Holy Willie" to the contempt and laughter of the world. At Kirk or "Holy Fair," in the pulpit or in the pew, he saw, as one that could see, superstition and nonsense and formality usurping the honours of religion, and he exposed the fraud and shamed the imposters with his terrible powers of sarcasm and of satire. As he wrote—

"But he gaed mad at their grimaces,  
Their sighing, canting, grace-proud faces,  
Their three-mile prayers and half-mile graces,  
Their raxing conscience,  
Whose greed, revenge and pride disgraces  
Waur than their nonsense."

Burns was ever on the side of right. Justice reigned in his heart. There are rude, indelicate lines in his poems, but nowhere an unjust or dishonourable sentiment. With but the change of one word here is the rule of all true morality:—



"The fear of hell's a hangman's whip,  
To haud the wretch in order,  
But where you feel your conscience grip  
Let that aye be your border.  
Its slightest touches, instant pause,  
Debar a' side pretences  
And resolutely keep its laws  
Uncaring consequences."

Burns had a truly religious soul. As in David and in Paul there were in Burns, as in every human being, two men—one that grovelled and another that soared; one with animal appetites and another with an angel's wings. Yet though the poet's penitence has exposed all his failings, those flaws were the best part of his entire character. "The Cottar's Saturday Night" is a photograph of his own father's family, so true, so profoundly religious, that it "electrified" Gilbert Burns, the poet's brother. That poem is the noblest defence of Scottish religion ever penned. When an infidel rails at the Christian religion Burns will give you the best possible answer?

"The great Creator to revere  
Must sure become the creature;  
But still the preaching can't forbear,  
And even the rigid feature,  
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range  
Be complaisance extended;  
An atheist's laugh's a poor exchange  
For Deity offended."

When the hour of trial and of trouble comes to you let poor Burns tell you where to go for comfort:—

"When on life we're tempest driven,  
A conscience but a canker,  
A correspondence fixed wi' heaven  
Is sure a noble anchor."

What is the hope that amid the confusion of time lightens the prospect of the future? Hear what the inspired ploughman says —

"Then let us pray that come it may,  
As come it will, for a' that,  
That sense and worth o'er a' the earth,  
May bear the gree and a' that,  
For a' that, and a' that,  
It's coming yet for a' that,  
That man to man the world o'er  
Shall brothers be for a' that."

What! Burns irreligious! He, at least, believed that he was a friend to genuine religion.

Here this apostrophe:—

"All hail, Religion, maid divine,  
Pardon a muse so mean as mine,  
Who in her rough, imperfect line,  
Thus daurs to name thee.  
To stigmatize false friends of thine,  
Can ne'er defame thee.

Though blotched and foul wi' many a stain  
And far unworthy of thy train,  
With trembling voice I tune my strain  
To join with those  
Who boldly dare thy cause maintain  
In spite of foes."

But someone will say, "What of the faults of Burns? Had he any?" Yes, indeed; but prithee tell us who he is that has no faults. His own lines on himself tell us all the story of his faults, in brief but pithy phrase:—

"The poor inhabitant below,  
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow  
And softer flame;  
But thoughtless follies laid him low  
And stained his name."

Some can hide their faults better than Burns hid his. Shakespeare says that what in the captain is only a rash word is "flat blasphemy" when uttered by the private soldier. In Burns's day lords and ladies used loose talk; yet in what Burns published himself there was very little of that kind of thing. His own prophecy is fulfilled:—"We are a' proud of Robin." Our country and our kin gave the world two great gifts—James Watt's steam engine and Robert Burns. Look at the marvels of steam, and think of the rich, warm, loving, wise poetry of this poet of the poor, and then say what other country or people have given the world a richer gift than either.

## XXVII.—THE BARDLINGS OF BURNS.

*By RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.*

To say that no poet can be thoroughly understood until his life is thoroughly understood is so evident a truism that it should go without saying, but, unfortunately, it does not; for out of a thousand readers of any poet whose reputation is acknowledged, there are not fifty who are acquainted with his personal history, and out of this fifty not five who are capable of determining how far it went to the making or marring of his character. It is not difficult, or ought not to be difficult, in this critical age, for a lover of poetry to tell why he loves it in the abstract, nor why of its concrete forms he loves one form more than another; why the poetry of Keats, say, is more to him than the poetry of Byron, or why the poetry of Tennyson is more to him than the poetry of Wordsworth. Poetry is not read now as it was in the days of Pope and Dryden, for what it stated, in ethics, in politics, and whatever else concerns the material well-being of man, but for what it suggests to his spiritual perception. The eighteenth century did not accept poetry unless it proved something; the nineteenth century accepts it if it proves itself. Why the verse of some poets, which is good up to a certain point, is not good beyond that point, is a question which most thoughtful readers of their verse often ask themselves, and to which the biographies of these poets afford the only satisfactory answer. They were greatly gifted, but they were not great. Why did not the seeds which were sown so plentifully in this genius ripen and bear an abundant harvest?

I have been reading the life of Burns lately more closely than ever before, and I think I understand as never before some of the causes of the striking inequality of his verse. I find one in the paucity of his early reading, and in the nature of that reading, which when not theological was certainly not imaginative, and I find another in the personality of his early friends, which was not of a kind to elevate his own. It was his misfortune to know men and women who were inferior to

himself, more inferior than he divined, for his estimate of himself was a modest one, while his gratitude at being recognised deceived him as to the value of the recognition. Sillar and Lapraik were well enough in their way, the one to converse with in his Sunday rambles across the fields at Mossiel, the other to drink a pint of ale with at Mauchline Fair, or something stronger at his home in Muirsmill, but they were not men from whom he could learn anything that he needed to know. What he learned from his Peggy Thomsons and Eliza Begbies he did not need to know, since it was already at the tip of his winning tongue.

We have several descriptions of Burns at different periods, but one above all others which to my mind authenticates itself as a faithful portrait. It is from the pen of an English man of letters, who, writing in many ways all his life, which was a long one, sought at first to distinguish himself as a poet. Of good family and well educated, about three years younger than Burns, Samuel Egerton Brydges published his first collection of verse nearly a year and a half before Burns published his *Kilmarnock* volume. It resembled the average poetry of the period, which had not shaken off the feeble fetters of the followers of Pope, though it was struggling toward the freedom which was soon to be given it by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and of which the most promising sign was its return to the cultivation of sonnetry. Brydges was a better sonneteer than Charlotte Smith, who appeared a year before him, and William Lisle Bowles, who appeared four years after him, not only because he preserved the legitimate form of the sonnet, which they neglected, but because the spirit of his sonnets was more perfect than the spirit of theirs, each being in itself a harmonious whole, a unit in feeling and expression; and one of his sonnets, which was contained in his first collection ("On Echo and Silence") has outlived all the books that he wrote and edited. He was not a poet, not-

withstanding the beauty of this sonnet, but he knew what poetry was, for besides his scholarship he possessed a sensitive, impressionable temperament, and he greatly admired the poetry of Burns, to whom, while he was living at Ellisland, he bore a letter of introduction, in the autumn of 1790.

He seems at first to have feared that his visit might be ill received, for he had heard that Burns was a moody person and difficult to deal with, but he summoned up courage and proceeded cautiously. But he shall tell his own story:

"About a mile from his residence, on a bench under a tree, I passed a figure which, from the engraved portraits of him, I did not doubt was the poet, but I did not venture to address him. On arriving at his humble cottage, Mrs. Burns opened the door; she was the plain sort of humble woman she has been described. She ushered me into a neat apartment, and said that she would send for Burns, who had gone for a walk. In about half an hour he came, and my conjecture proved right; he was the person I had seen on the bench by the roadside. At first I was not entirely pleased with his countenance. I thought it had a sort of capricious jealousy, as if he was half inclined to treat me as an intruder. I resolved to bear it, and try if I could humour him. I let him choose his turn of conversation, but said a word about the friend whose letter I had brought to him. It was now about four in the afternoon of an autumn day. While we were talking, Mrs. Burns, as if accustomed to entertain visitors in this way, brought in a bottle of Scotch whisky, and set the table. I accepted this hospitality. I could not help observing the curious glance with which he watched me at the entrance of this sequel of homely entertainment. He was satisfied; he filled our glasses. 'Here's a health to auld Caledonia!' The fire sparkled in his eye, and mine sympathetically met his. He shook my hands, and we were friends at once. Then he drank, 'Erin forever!' and the tear of delight burst from his eye. The fountain of his mind and his heart opened at once, and flowed with abundant force almost till midnight. He had amazing acuteness of intellect as well as glow of sentiment. I do not

deny that he said some absurd things, and many coarse ones, and that his knowledge was very irregular, and sometimes too presumptuous, and that he did not endure contradiction with sufficient patience. His pride, and perhaps his vanity, was even morbid. I carefully avoided topics in which he could not take an active part. Of literary gossip he knew nothing, and, therefore, I kept aloof from it; in the technical parts of literature, his opinions were crude and unformed, but whenever he spoke of a great writer whom he had read, his taste was generally sound. To a few minor writers he gave more credit than they deserved. His grand beauty was his manly strength, and his energy and elevation of thought and feeling. He had always a full mind, and all flowed from a genuine spring. I never conversed with a man who appeared to be more warmly impressed with the beauties of nature, and visions of female beauty and tenderness seemed to transport him. He did not merely appear to be a poet at casual intervals, but at every moment a poetical enthusiasm seemed to beat in his veins, and he lived all his days the inward if not the outward life of a poet. I thought I perceived in Burns's cheek the symptoms of an energy which had been pushed too far, and he had this feeling himself. Every now and then he spoke of the grave so soon about to close over him. His dark eye had at first a character of sternness, but as he became warm, though this did not entirely melt away, it was mingled with changes of extreme softness."

This delineation of Burns in his thirty-second year is not only a notable example of intellectual portraiture, but to those who have studied his writings is an acute analysis of his genius, which accomplished what it did through its own intensity and not through the adventitious aid of books. That his knowledge was very irregular, as his visitor could not but feel, was not so surprising as that he succeeded in acquiring any knowledge; nor was it surprising that his opinions concerning the literary art were crude and unformed. His familiarity with great writers was not extensive enough to instruct him; he was misinstructed by minor writers, with whom his acquaintance was sufficiently large. He read



without judgment and admired without taste. This circumstance explains the mediocrity which characterizes all his English writings, and explains at the same time the good-natured favour which he wasted upon indifferent writers, particularly when they happened to be his brother and sister poets; for the sisterhood of singers was represented by others than the Scottish milkmaid.

One of these singers was Jeanie Glover, who was born at Kilmarnock about three months before Burns, of what the patronizing biographers of the last century designated poor but honest parents. She was brought up in the principles of rectitude, we are told, and had the advantages of that early education which few Scottish families are without. But unfortunately for those advantages and principles, she was beautiful in face and person, and knew it, and was a fine singer, and knew that also; so one day, when a company of strolling players came to Kilmarnock, she became stage-struck, and eloping with one of them named Richard, led a life of ups and downs, playing at fairs, in booths, and the large rooms of public houses, one of which houses at Muirkirk was appropriately called the "Black Bottle." Failing to attain eminence in the legitimate drama, Richard courted public favour as a conjurer, and, while he exercised his sleight of hand tricks, Jeanie, attired in her cheap finery, sang and played the tambourine close by. When Burns knew her character was not of a kind that ladies covet, and to her other accomplishments she added the reputation of a thief, in which capacity she visited most of the correction houses in the West of Scotland. But whatever Jeanie may have been, she was a poet, if she composed, as Burns believed she did, a song which he took down from her singing as she was strolling through the country with her sleight of hand blackguard, and sent to Johnson's *Scots Museum*, where, as in most later miscellanies of that sort, it may be found. It is a pretty trifle, fresh in feeling and simple in expression, with a refrain or chorus that sings itself:—

"O'er the moor amang the heather,  
O'er the moor amang the heather,  
There I met a bonnie lassie,  
Keeping a' her yowes together."

She outlived Burns about five years, dying in the town of Letterkenny, in Ireland, and where a soldier, who had heard her sing in "Croft Lodge" in Kilmarnock, had the honour of her company over a social glass. Such was Jeanie Glover.

Another of these singers was Isobel Pagan, who was born a year or two after Burns. She was not a comely person, like Miss Glover, for she squinted with one of her eyes, and was deformed in one foot so as to require crutches in walking. Of her early years nothing is known, except what she has related of herself in one of her poems, and, as it is not particularly to her credit, it may probably be depended upon. It runs as follows:—

"I was born near four miles from Nithhead,  
Where fourteen years I got my bread;  
My learning it can soon be told,  
Ten weeks, when I was seven years old,  
With a good, old religious wife,  
Who lived a quiet and sober life;  
Indeed, she took of me more pains  
Than some does now of forty bairns.  
With my attention, and her skill,  
I read the Bible no that ill;  
And when I grew a wee thought mair,  
I read when I had time to spare;  
But a' the whole tract of my time  
I found myself inclined to rhyme;  
When I see merry company,  
I sing a song with mirth and glee,  
And sometimes I the whisky pree,  
But 'deed it's best to let it be."

But let it be what Isobel never did for any length of time, for, having wit, high spirits, and an excellent voice, she was noted for her conviviality. She lived for many years in the neighbourhood of Muirkirk, at first in a cottage at Muirsmill, and afterwards in another, which was given to her by Admiral Keith Stewart. It stood on the banks of the Galap Water, and was constructed out of a low arch, which was originally built for a brick store. Here she lived alone, taking care of herself as well as she could, for, despite her lameness, which prevented her from work, her relations did nothing for her; but she had, if not friends, certainly companions, who night after night frequented her cottage, and made its vaulted roof ring with their revelry. What these *noctes* of Isobel's were we may imagine after reading Burns's cantata of "The Jolly Beggars," the scene of which might well have been laid at her cottage,



though it was really laid, I believe, at the lodging house of Poosie Nansie, in Mauchline. Isobel was famous throughout the country side for her singing, her biting sarcasms, and her supply of spirits; for though she had no license to sell them, she always contrived to find a bottle for her customers, who were not confined to people of her sort, but embraced in summer what was then called the gentry, who came from all quarters to the moors of Muirkirk for grouse shooting. Sometimes they sent for her, that they might hear her songs and ribald jests, and, after rewarding her with a little money, left her late at night to find her unsteady way home. It was a piece of brutality on their part; but in censuring it, as we must, we should remember that the age in which they were living was a brutal one, when inebriety was the rule and not the exception, and when the commonality were expected to minister to the mirth of the quality. Furthermore,

“ Evil is wrought from want of thought,  
As well as from want of heart.”

But no hand save the one that penned the history of “Moll Flanders” could do justice to the career of Isobel Pagan, so I shall not attempt it, for realism, as we understand it now, avoids the description of frailties like hers. She published her poems about ten years after the death of Burns, and they are not bad of their unlettered kind. They were not written by herself, for, though she could read, she could not write, but were taken down from her recitation by a tailor, whom she pressed into her service, as an amanuensis, and who may have softened some of her coarse touches. The best of them is a rustic love song, in six stanzas, of which the following is the first:—

“ Ca’ the yowes to the knowes,  
Ca’ them where the heather grows,  
Ca’ them where the burnie bows,  
My bonnie dearie.”

She died in the fall of 1821, in her eightieth year, and was buried in a heavy storm, in the churchyard at Muirkirk, where a stone was erected over her grave.

Another of these singers was Gavin Turnbull, whose early years were spent in Kilmarnock, where he and his father, whom the townspeople called “Tommy Tumble,” used

to pass their days together in tippling houses. Poetry and poverty went hand in hand with young Master Gavin, as with good old Thomas Churchyard, for while in Kilmarnock he lived alone in a small garret without any furniture. “The bed on which he lay was entirely composed of straw, with the exception of an old patched covering, which he threw over him during the night. He had no chair to sit upon. A cold stone placed by the fire served him as such; and the sill of a small window at one end of the room was all he had for a table, from which to take his food, or on which to write his verses. A tin kettle and a spoon were all his cooking utensils; and, when he prepared a meal for himself, he used the lid of the kettle instead of a bowl.” But he did not heed these discomforts, for he was a poet, and so long as he could procure pens, ink and paper he was happy. The success of Burns, which turned the heads of so many bardlings, impelled him to issue his “Poetical Essays” in the same year that Lapraik issued his “Poems on General Occasions” (1788), the pair preceding by a year their brother poet Sillar in his clutch after the laurel. Of the three Turnbull was the best educated, at least in English verse, which he wrote like the celebrated Person of Quality, his model being Thurston, who still held his place among the English poets. From Kilmarnock Turnbull removed to Dumfries, where his book was published, where he became a comedian, and where he knew Burns (who, however, may have made his acquaintance before), who, in writing to Mr. George Thomson, of Edinburgh, in October, 1793, spoke of Turnbull as an old friend and copied in his letter three of Turnbull’s unpublished poems, in the hope that they might suit his collection of melodies. He liked some of his pieces very much, he said, and one which he liked was this conventional little song:

#### “THE NIGHTINGALE.

“Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove  
That ever tried the plaintive strain,  
Awake thy tender tale of love,  
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

“For though the music deign to aid,  
And teach him smoothly to complain;  
Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,  
Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

"All day with fashion's gaudy sons  
In sport she wanders o'er the plains ;  
Their tales approve, and still she shuns  
The notes of her forsaken swain.

"When evening shades obscure the sky,  
And bring the solemn hours again,  
Begin, sweet bird, thy melody,  
And soothe a poor forsaken swain."

Turnbull is supposed to have emigrated to America, and to have died there, which is all that is known about him, and much more than would have been known if he had not happened to be a friend of Burns, who, in his case certainly, gave more credit to a minor writer than he deserved.

## XXVIII.—ALEX. TAIT, THE "TARBOLTON POET."

SAUNDERS TAIT, a rhyming "knight of the needle," was truly a contemporary of Burns, and residing as he did for many years in the village of Tarbolton, knew him personally and intimately, and had the honour besides of being selected as the object of a few satirical couplets by the Poet. Humphrey of Mauchline found fame of a sort through Burns having called him a "bletherin' bitch"—the poor man was proud of the distinction—and Tait's only title to remembrance is that he received a little attention from the National Bard in some extemporaneous flashes of wit suggested by the poetical pretensions of *Saunders*, but which have not been preserved. Tait, however, did not appreciate the honour, and retaliated in anything but measured or complimentary language. Burns and David Sillars were "bosom cronies" at the time alluded to ; and it appears that the latter had been guilty also of some poetical offence against the tailor. The first of the retaliatory pieces is entitled "Sillar and Tait; or, Tit for Tat"—

"My pipe wi' wind I maun gae fill'er  
And play a tune to Davie Sillar ;"

and then the author goes on to describe some indiscretions with which David stood charged by the "feckless clash" of the neighbourhood, comparing him in these matters as a perfect equal to "braw Rab Burns." Having repaid Davie for his compliment, he next directs his whole attack on Burns, but in a style too scandalous to bear quotation. His pieces, indeed, would be intolerable but for their absurdity, and are only amusing from the local incidents to which they allude.

Tait, who is believed to have been born somewhere in Peeblesshire, found his way

westward in the capacity of a pedlar ; and as in those days mantu-making formed no inconsiderable branch of the business of a tailor, it was not unusual for him, on selling a gown-piece, to remain in the house of the fair purchaser until he had shaped and sewed it. Latterly, however, he laid aside the pack and settled in the village of Tarbolton, where he became a well-known character. He was rather a smart, active sort of personage, with a great degree of vivacity in his smiling countenance ; and, as he possessed an inexhaustible fund of anecdote and humour, he was the very life and soul of wedding, *rocking*, or other merry-making parties. At the country fire-side he was always a welcome addition. Everybody esteemed him, for although his poetical license of lampooning sometimes created an enemy, no one cared to provoke his muse by manifesting their displeasure. All local squabbles, or any peculiar occurrence, found a ready chronicler in Saunders. Though regarded as somewhat of an eccentric, he had nevertheless considerable influence in the village, and took an active hand in every public movement. At the time the building of the Secession Church was in progress, to the erection of which the parish minister and neighbouring gentry were greatly opposed, the work was interrupted for the want of hewn stone. At a public meeting held to consider what should be done he undertook to manage the affair by a plan which he said he had in his eye. The scheme was a very circuitous one, and nobody thought it would prove successful ; nevertheless he gained his object in a few days, and thereby established his reputation for superior sagacity.

With the view of augmenting the number of members the Universal Friendly Society of Tarbolton used to have frequent processions. On these occasions there were generally two candidates for the Colonelcy, and the one who produced most members became entitled to the honour. The canvass was usually keen. At one of the contested affairs of this kind Sandy started in opposition to William Sillar, Spittleside (brother of the poet, David), and gained by a great majority. The writer's informant perfectly recollected the poet with his cocked hat marching proudly through the village at the head of the long train of members who followed. He was also Bailie of Tarbolton for some time—no mean proof of his respectability and character. In allusion to the various offices of trust and honour confided in him, he says, in one of his poems—

“I'm Patron to the Burgher folks,  
I'm Cornal to the Farmers' Box,  
And Bailie to guid hearty cocks,  
That are a' grand—  
Hae heaps o' houses built on rocks  
Wi' lime and sand.”

Saunders was at one period a man of property, having purchased two or three houses in the village; but these he did not long retain, whether he had not the means, or wished to realise a profit by the sale, it is impossible to say.

In 1794, when Major Montgomerie, afterwards Earl of Eglinton, raised his regiment of West Lowland Fencibles, Saunders, though well advanced in years, was among the first, we believe, to enrol his name under the banners of the warlike Major. In “Kay's Edinburgh Portraits,” where a portrait and memoir of the Earl are given, the following notice of Tait, by way of a foot-note, is also appended:—“Among others who ‘followed to the field’ was an eccentric personage of the name of Tait. He was a tailor, and in stature somewhat beneath the military standard; but he was a poet, and zealous in the cause of loyalty. He had sung the deeds of the Montgomeries in many a couplet; and, having animated the villagers with his loyal strains, resolved, like a second Tyrtæus, to encourage his companions in arms to victory by the fire and vigour of his verses. It is said he could not write; nevertheless

he actually published a small volume of poems. These have long ago sunk into oblivion. Still ‘Sawney Tait, the tailor,’ is well remembered. He was a bachelor, and, like a true son of genius, occupied an attic of very small dimensions. At the ‘June fair,’ when the village was crowded, Saunders, by a tolerated infringement of the excise laws, annually converted his ‘poet's corner’ into a temple for the worship of Bacchus, and became publican in a small way. He was himself the presiding genius, and his apartment was always well frequented, especially by the younger portion of the country people, who were amused with his oddities. He sung with peculiar animation, and failed not to give due recitative effect to the more lengthy productions of his muse—it might be in celebration of a bonspiel, in which the curlers of Tarbolton had been victorious over those of the parish of Stair, of a lovmatch, or such other local matter calculated to interest his rustic hearers, by whom his poems were highly applauded as being ‘unco weel put thegither.’ Some of his songs obtained a temporary popularity. One in particular, on Mrs. Alexander of Ballochmyle, was much talked of, probably from the circumstance of the lady having condescended to patronise the village laureate by requesting his attendance at Ballochmyle, where he recited the piece, was rewarded, and afterwards continued to be a privileged frequenter of the hall. Poor Saunders, unluckily, was more in repute for his songs than his needle. He was, no doubt, uncommonly expeditious, in proof of which it is told that on some particular occasion he had made a coat in one day; but then his ‘steeks’ were prodigiously long, and with him fashion was out of the question, abiding as he always did by the ‘good old plan.’ The result was that while his brethren of the needle were paid eighteenpence a-day, Saunders acknowledged his inferiority by claiming no more than sixpence! The military ardour of the poet was somewhat evanescent. Whether the duties were too fatiguing, or whether his compatriots had no relish for poetical excitements, we know not, but true it is that in the dusk of a summer evening, some few weeks after the departure of the Fencibles, Saunders was



seen entering the village leading a goat which he had procured in his travels, and followed by a band of youngsters, who had gone to meet him on his approach."

Saunders published his volume in 1790. It was printed in Paisley, we believe, "for and sold by the author only" at the small charge of 1s. 6d., though containing upwards of 280 pages octavo. Saunders appears from his volume to have spent some time in Paisley as a journeyman tailor with one Daniel Mitchell in John Street. The lads in the weaving-shop next door, having found out his rhyming propensities, were in the habit of challenging him to a trial of skill, and scraps of verses passed between them, greatly to the amusement of the weavers, who were obliged to admit that the tailor's *goose* made the smoothest doggerel. "Daunie" Mitchell was also from Tarbolton, and appears to have been as queer a fish as his journeyman. He had *rowth* of droll stories and anecdotes, which his acquaintances could easily draw from him over a gill when they wanted diversion. One of his stories would have made a capital "History" in the hands of Dugald Graham, and might have been entitled, "The Wonderful Adventures of Daunie Mitchell, Tailor," showing how that Daunie, in flying from a gauger, took refuge in a cooper's shed, where he hid himself in a barrel; how the cooper came and knocked on the head of the barrel, while Daunie lay within and durst not discover himself; how a bull came past, and, while rubbing himself against the barrel, was seized by Daunie by the tail through the bung-hole; how the bull roared and flung, and knocked Daunie and

the barrel into the Water of Ayr; how Daunie stopped the bung-hole with his coat-tail, and went swimming down the water as far as the town of Ayr, when the folks on the river side, every one crying, "The barrel's mine, the barrel's mine!" drew the prize to land; how that, finding the barrel to contain something heavy, it was broken open, when out jumped Daunie, exclaiming, "The barrel's *yours*!—na, na, the barrel's *mine*!" and marched off with it in triumph, while the good folks of Ayr scampered away helter-skelter, believing him to be no other than the devil himself.

Our reminiscences of the poet extend a little farther. Tait was never married, and, as mentioned in the extract from "Kay's Portraits," lived generally in a garret without any companion whatever, save a large, tame rat, which invariably made its appearance at meal-time. One day a female came in when Saunders and his favourite were at dinner together. The rat, not accustomed to interruption, sprung up below the intruder's petticoat. She screamed for assistance, and some of the neighbours rushing in, the rat was killed, much to the grief and wrath of the poet. Among the many things for which the tailor was distinguished, we may mention his fondness for Pennystone playing. He once undertook a match with a flesher from Ayr and beat him. Saunders did not long survive his return from the Fencibles. Being ill, and finding his end approaching, he was taken to the house of William Wallace, a short distance from the village, and died there towards the close of the century.

## XXIX.—BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON BURNS.

By JOHN MUIR, F.S.A., Scot., Author of "*Thomas Carlyle's Apprenticeship*," etc.

### COCKNEY EDITIONS OF BURNS.

DOUGLAS GRAHAM, of Shanter, a farm on the Kirkoswald coast, in Ayrshire, has been so long associated in the public mind as the original of Burns's equestrian hero in the most wonderful ride in modern poetry, that it is hardly worth while to bring forward another claimant with any great hope of

having his claims recognised or even considered. Occasionally, in the correspondence of the daily newspapers, abortive efforts are made to unsaddle Tam in order that Maggie may gallop through the Elysian fields of poesy with the rightful rider on her back. One Thomas Reid is well known to the curious in such matters as a claimant for the



honour of having been the prototype of the hero of Burns's inimitable tale. But Thomas, although his case is strongly supported by testimonials as to his bibulous habits, has not been successful in winning the sympathy of the public, a misfortune upon which Thomas may be said to look with indifference *now*, however much it may have concerned him while alive; for as his supply of usquebaugh depended on the security of his reputation as the indubitable Tam, we may rest assured that the goodman was not indifferent to his claims to a distinction with which his whole life was bound up, and which ultimately caused his end.

Possibly few of our readers have ever heard of Tam Skelpit, another claimant. We ourselves only made the acquaintance of Mr. Skelpit some few months ago. This gentleman is under the disadvantage of having been born at some place considerably south of the Tweed. Our own impression is that he is a Londoner pure and simple; and may, as a boy, have carried crumpits and muffins to Samuel Pickwick, Esquire, or even have acted as stable-hand to Mr. Weller, Senior, but he certainly never "rode the grey mare Meg." He was first introduced to the reading public by a London publisher. We quote the following lines, in which Tom (for he is an "Englisher," as we said) is described as careering on his mad journey—

"Tam Skelpit on through dub and mire,  
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;  
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,  
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet."

Hitherto the generally accepted belief has been that "The Cottar's Saturday Night" is a delineation of the domestic life of William Burnes, the poet's father. Judging from the edition under review, such a supposition is erroneous; and the family life depicted is that of one Hafflins. Beyond the name, nothing seems to be known regarding this family, and our editor, whom we may call Mr. Blank, does not think it worth while to offer a word or two of explanation, except what may be gleaned from the following lines:—

"The wily mother sees the conscious flame  
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e and flush her cheek;  
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,

While Jenny Hafflins is afraid to speak,  
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild worth-  
less rake."

We might continue our quotations for several columns, but the above must suffice as a specimen of Mr. Blank's work as an expositor of Burns's writings.

Some time ago a correspondence was initiated in the columns of a Glasgow newspaper by a member of the Bibliographical Society regarding the editions of Burns, edited by the Rev. Robert Aris Willmott, who is well known to collectors as the editor of ten editions of the poetical works of Burns, which were published during the years extending from 1856 to 1880. In reply to the first letter from the bibliophile, a gentleman wrote:—

"This is one of the oft-repeated editions that have but little attraction to the student of the past. The late Mr. M'Kie, who was nothing if not thorough, called it a 'castrated edition,' and it will be in the recollection of readers that it figured in the 1890 Ayr election, which was said to have been 'won by the Louse.' Mr. Routledge, it will be remembered, based his claim on the suffrages of the electors on the fact that on his entering business, he published this book, and that when it had been pointed out that the edition was 'Louseless,' and that it attributed to Burns several poems which were the work of other poets, Mr. Routledge apologised for the book by saying that it was got up for children."

I had always thought that the writings of Burns in any form whatever were interesting to "students of the poet," just as any edition of Milton or the Bible is of interest to us. But this is precisely where an amateur fails to see the bibliographical aspect of Burns from the dealer's point of view. These editions of Willmott's are certainly of little interest to "dealers in the poet." For one thing, they are too common, and consequently do not fetch a good price; but for "students of the poet" they are certainly interesting, and are by no means so contemptible as some people would have us imagine.

Burns's first edition, admirable as it is in every way, even from the bibliopole's point of view, does not retain its present position

in literature as a bibliographical curiosity ; but lives, as its hundreds of successors do, by virtue of its intrinsic merits and the poetry it contains. It is well to bear in mind that the utmost perfection of typography, and the most *recherche* binding, will not keep alive a book independent of its contents ; and for anyone to state that such and such an edition of Burns, or Milton, or Dante, or any other author, has no interest to students, is simply stating what is not true, and can never, in the nature of things, be true, but is false, and contrary to all historical teaching.

Take one instance. In the same year as that in which Burns first made his name known to his countrymen as the author of "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect," Samuel Rogers printed at London, in the fashionable quarto of the day, his "Ode to Superstition : with other Poems." Had the wisecracks of the latter end of the eighteenth century judged books according to the above letter, they would have had little difficulty in awarding the palm to Rogers, and predicating immortality for the rich banker's handsome quarto, and oblivion for the Ayrshire ploughman's plain octavo. But the eighteenth century students and the reading public generally, down to the present hour, decided that the humble effusions of Burns were of more value to the world than the classicality of Rogers ; hence it comes that to-day Rogers' production can be bought for a trifle, whereas the Kilmarnock volume fetches as much as a hundred and twenty pounds ; and a gentleman was recently offered privately £200 for his copy—one of the most perfect copies known to exist, being in the original covers, uncut and unsoiled—in fact, almost as fresh as when it left John Wilson's premises.

I do not doubt but that Mr. Routledge may have depreciated his productions in furtherance of his candidature, although it is not a usual way either of talking about one's business or of pushing the "good cause." I am quite content to accept the explanation as an apology for some of the careless editing, of which these editions are remarkable examples. But Mr. Routledge evidently knows little about Burns, and less about the Willmott editions of the poet's works pub-

lished by his firm, when he admitted that they did not contain the poem on the *Louse*, as that unconventional effusion is given by Mr. Willmott—not, it is true, entitled after the manner of Burns, but more delicately headed thus—"To a —, on seeing one on a lady's bonnet at church," and to crown all, in view of the fact that a copy of Willmott's edition costs 5s., to state that they were "got up for children !" I rejoice to think that the children of Great Britain are such enthusiastic students of Burns that Mr. Willmott's "Poetical Works of Robert Burns," first published in 1856, ran through ten editions in twenty-four years—1856, 1858, 1859, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1869, and 1880. I only hope that when these children grow up to be men and women, their knowledge of Burns will progress with their years, that so they may be a standing admonition to their seniors.

Mr. Willmott could not forget his sacred calling even when editing the profane writings of Burns. The lines (page 191) "Sent to a Gentleman whom he had offended," turn up in the contents "Lines sent to a Clergyman whom he had offended," and the "Epistle to James Tennent, Glenconner," seems also to have been sent by the poet as a "Letter to James Tait, Glenconner." It would not surprise our readers to learn that Burns had sent lines to a clergyman whom he had offended. The poet had quite a genius for offending clergymen, but he never that we know of, in one single instance, thought of making apologies, except in his peculiar way of adding insult to injury—of backing up his "Holy Willie" by his "Epitaph" on the me.

Not only is Mr. Willmott anxious to reconcile the poet to his clerical contemporaries, but he insinuates that Burns had a secret longing after Episcopalianism, and makes it clear that Presbyterianism is rather a prosaic form of religion for a poet ("Memoirs," page 151) :

Born and brought up a Presbyterian, the Gospel came to him in the roar of Black Russell and the invectives of Father Auld. In no dress could the creed look fair or engaging. A man of taste in a kirk has a feeling of being snowed up in an unfurnished

house without a fire. A chill strikes him from the cold building and the colder worship. In one of the poet's journals we hear him pouring out his intense disgust: "What a poor, pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship—dirty, narrow, squalid, stuck in a corner of old Popish grandeur, such as Linlithgow, and much more, Melrose." His greatest countrymen have shared his dislike: Byron remembered the fiery Calvinism of his boyhood with a sense of personal injury; the heart of Scott yearned for that nobler and purer ritual which has breathed into its prayers the devotion and the language of the Apostles; and the sentiments of Jeffrey are known to have been of the same kind.

Presbyterianism in Burns's time was coarser and fiercer than in ours. Vulgar in attire, wrathful in look, menacing in speech, it combined in its visage the most repulsive features of the faith. Nor had it always inward virtue to atone for the outward offence. The elders frequently showed the curiosity of the Inquisition, and in some of the ministers might be seen the tyranny of the cowl, without the romance.

The poem, "To a Louse," on page 118, is entitled "To a —, on Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church"—neither a very poetical nor yet a very scientific way of designating that small, troublesome insect of the genus *pediculus*. As one might have anticipated, an incumbent of the Church of England was almost sure not to relish the idea of a louse creeping over a lady's bonnet at Church. Neither did Burns, who confesses to as much. The

"Blastit wonner,  
Detested, shunned, by saunt an' sinner,"

as it undoubtedly is, was there all the same; and the poet did well, *pace* your Reverence, to "tak' a note o't." And so should Mr. Willmott, only he didn't, and therein is he blameworthy. But we will not be too severe on our clerical editor. We merely quote, for the benefit of all such superfine individuals, the last verse of the piece, "To a —":

"O wad some Power the gistie gie us  
To see oursel's as others see us!  
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,  
And foolish notion;  
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,  
And ev'n devotion!"

But if these editions are of no value to "students of the poet," how comes it that Mr. Routledge's firm had to publish ten editions to meet the demand? If these editions are of no interest to students of Burns, it would be interesting to learn how the Messrs. Routledge contrived to dispose of so many thousands of copies. These must have been of interest to some one—at the very lowest somebody must have bought them. That they are of no interest to dealers I am quite willing to believe, for out of the above series of ten editions, only three are recorded in the catalogue and preserved in the collection bearing the name of the late Mr. James M'Kie, which the Kilmarnock people have every reason to congratulate themselves upon as one of the finest collections of Burns and Burnsiana in the world. But if the Library Committee are not above taking a hint from a stranger, I would suggest that, in place of the following list of books, which are absolutely worthless and of no account whatever as Burnsiana, be withdrawn from the library, and presented to some impecunious chapman, to make room for the seven Willmott editions, and the hundreds of editions of Burns and Burnsiana which no collection intended to meet the wants of students of Burns should be without:—

#### FICTITIOUS BURNSIANA.

1788. Ramsay's Tea Table Miscellany. 2 vols. in one. 12mo. John Wilson, Kilmarnock.

1789. The Practical Figurer. 8vo. (By William Halbert, schoolmaster, Auchinleck). John Neilson, Paisley. The poet's name appears among the list of subscribers—"Robert Burns of Parnassus."

1790. Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect. (By A. Shirrifs, A.M.). W. Creech and P. Hill, Edinburgh. Burns met the author at Aberdeen, and describes him as "a little decrepit body, with some abilities."

1800. Ferguson's Poems. Two copies. Different authors. Burns erected a monument to Ferguson in the Canongate Churchyard, Edinburgh.

1802. The Metrical Miscellany. 8vo. Consisting chiefly of poems hitherto unpublished. This collection was edited by Mrs.



Walter Riddel, the friend of Burns, and contains eighteen of her poems.

1803. Information for Thomas Stewart, bookseller, Greenock, against Messrs. Caddell & Davies, and others. Answers for James Robertson, printer in Edinburgh, in Edinburgh; do. the petition of Caddell & Davies respecting the printing and publishing of the Letters to Clarinda. 4to. Stitched up with other Burnsiana.

1803. Zeluco. (By Dr. Moore). 2 vols. in one. 12mo. A favourite book of Burns in his early days. To Dr. Moore Burns sent the sketch of his early life, which has been copied by almost every biographer since.

1810. Remains of Nithsdale and Gallo-way Song. (By R. H. Cromek, editor of the Reliques of Burns). 8vo. Caddell & Davies, London.

1815. Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces. (By the late William Creech). To which is prefixed an account of his life. 8vo. John Fairbairn, successor to Creech, Edinburgh, the well-known Edinburgh publisher of Burns.

1823. An Essay on the Objects of Taste. Chalmers & Collins, Glasgow. Written by a daughter of Mrs. Dunlop, the "Fair Rachael" of Burns.

1831. Reasons for the Hope that is in us. A series of essays by Robert Ainslie. Henry Constable, Edinburgh. "Bob Ainslie," the friend and correspondent of Burns, who accompanied him on his Border tour.

1843. Dr. Mackinlay's Sermons. 12mo. Kilmarnock: John Davie. The "Simper James" of Burns.

1856. Miscellaneous Poems. By Sarah Parker, the "Irish Girl." Crown 8vo. Second edition. Glasgow: Bowie & Glen.

The gullibility of the public is simply astounding. Observe a Scotsman bargaining about a house or a horse, or even buying a pennyworth of tape or a farthing candle, and you will conclude that he is the shrewdest and most commonsense man in the world. And so he is—but only in the matter of tapes and candles. Try him on the patriotic side, and you find that he is a downright simpleton. Get him to believe that it is the correct thing to have a good portrait of Burns on his library walls, a nice set of editions of

the poet's works and choice Burnsiana on his shelves, and the bargain is all on the seller's side. Persuade him into the notion that—well, after all, it is nice to have a collection of Burns at fabulous prices, and your fortune is made.

There are, I should fancy, fully four thousand volumes in existence relating to Burns, either editions of his works or books bearing on these and his biography; and yet even this enormous quantity of books is not sufficient to quench the thirst of the insatiable Burns enthusiast for knowledge, and so dealers, in sheer desperation, are compelled for the honour of their calling to create fictitious Burnsiana. Books having no other earthly connection with Burns than the terribly prosaic one that they were printed at the same press as the first Kilmarnock edition, are invitingly catalogued as "Burnsiana," and such sturdy prices asked for them as would stagger even Dives himself. Again, you will be asked to buy a volume of metaphysical prelections on the ground that John Wilson, ycleped Dr. Hornbook, transcribed them for some professor who was so indifferent to the charms of literary fame that he would not trouble himself further than to deliver them before his class. For this entrancing work you are only asked to forfeit half of your week's salary. Or, it may be that you would prefer for your Burnsiana reading a most thrilling account of a legal prosecution at the instance of some publisher of editions of Burns against his piratical neighbour, compared with which Coke upon Lyttleton and Blackstone's Commentaries are simply not to be mentioned in the same breath. If you are inclined that way, you can be supplied for a sufficient quantity of silver coin running up into two figures. If you are a budding Montesquieu, collecting materials for a new "Spirit of Laws," here is *esprit* enough in all conscience, and you will do well to set up to the advice of the methodical Captain Cuttle and make a note of it.

Perhaps you would like to rival the elder Disraeli's Essay on Prefaces by writing a learned work on Dedications. If so, here is a specimen from a book which entitles it to be catalogued as "Burnsiana: " "Dedicated



to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, the friend of Burns."

Every collector of any pretensions has a desire to get a copy of Burns's first edition; failing that, a copy of the *fac-simile* reprint. A curious thing about the *fac-simile*, according to a catalogue before me, is that it "contains several pieces which were afterwards

suppressed, being rather free." Besides being a collector, you may be a student of erotic poetry of the unconventional kind usually to be found in privately printed copies of the *Merry Muses*. If so, here is an opportunity of adding another book to your collection and having a night's enjoyment with your convivial friends.

### XXX.—BURNS'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CLERGY OF HIS DAY.

*An Address by Rev. JOHN BROWN, (A Native of Colinton, Kyles of Bute, Scotland).*

Delivered before the Fall River, Mass., Caledonian Society, January 23, 1889.

FROM the going down of the sun to-day in old Scotland till its arising again on to-morrow, Scotchmen, and English speaking people the world over, will meet, as we have now done, to celebrate the natal day of Scotland's national bard. To-day the sun, in his course around the globe, will call to remembrance one that is dear to all men. Honour is due him and honour will be done him. Sweet singers will sing their sweetest songs, and gifted orators will deliver their most eloquent orations in his praise. I therefore feel that in asking me to deliver the oration on the present occasion you have conferred on me a great honour, and I beg to apologize for my unworthiness, in the language of "Holy Willie:"

"Wha am I or my generation  
That I should get sic exaltation."

And yet, there is a certain sort of fitness that a Brown should be honoured in connection with the day we celebrate. If it were not for the Browns there would have been no poet Burns. His mother, you know, was a Brown—Agnes Brown. The Smiths and the Joneses claim great things, but we can beat them all to pieces in giving distinguished men to the world all the way from—Adam down. Anyhow, we have given Burns, and that is glory enough for one family. But be it known to the world further that with the man Robert Burns, we gave the poet Robert Burns. There is nothing to show that there was the least streak of poetical genius on the father's side of the house, but there is positive evidence that there was lots of it on the mother's side. The Brownings of England,

I believe, were originally Scotch Browns. But when they went to England they wished to become English, you know, and Englished the name by adding "ing" to it. Aye, and just spoiled it. Agnes Brown, the leal-hearted Ayrshire lassie that gave birth to our poet, was undoubtedly a poetess. Carlyle says that poetry is "musical thought." If this is correct, then Agnes Brown was brimful of it. It is said that she was musical all the time. She sung when she got up in the morning, she sung when she swept out the "auld clay biggin'," she sung when she made the porridge, she sung when she rocked the cradle, she sung when she spinned—she sung all the time, and so sweetly, too, that she would, it is said, "fetch the ducks out of the water to hear her." She was just such a woman as one would expect the mother of Robbie Burns to be, and we have no hesitation, therefore, in saying, that Scotia's bard drank in the poetical in his nature with his mother's milk.

Next after his mother in the making of our poet was the natural scenery of his native land. The Americans are the best people in the world, but I feel sorry for them when I think they were not born in Scotland. I am well aware that a Scotchman expatiating on the beauties of the land of his birth is in danger of exaggerating. But where under the sun can you find such natural scenery as in Scotland? Wander amid the dreamy splendours of the Orient, and the golden glories of the Occident; then stroll along the banks and braes of bonnie Doon, the bonnie banks of Ayr, or on the brow of lofty Ben

Lomond and judge for yourselves if exaggeration is possible. Indeed, born amid such beauty and grandeur as hill and dale presents, it is surprising that every Scot is not a poet, and that the world is not flooded with Scotch poetry.

Burns, anyhow, responded to the inspiring influences of the beautiful and sublime around him, and flowered out grandly as a poet. He could not help it. With such heart and imagination as he had within, and such natural scenery without, for his large, dark eyes to look upon, you might as well try to keep the lark from singing at the approach of the morning, or the red rose from blooming in the month of June. Those who have travelled in Ayrshire know that in summer time there are spots there rivalling old Eden to loveliness. Then, too, the poet looking across the firth of Clyde could see the Arran hills rising like crowned kings out of the sea, the dark hills of Argyllshire clothed in mist, reposing like sleeping giants by the shores of the Atlantic, the waves rolling in from west on the pebbly strand of the Ayrshire coast making music like the laughter of the sea. These, and ten thousand other grand and sublime natural objects powerfully influenced the developing mind and soul of Robert Burns, and helped to make him what we know him to have been, a true poet of nature.

The political condition of Scotland during the eighteenth century helped also to develop the poetical genius of him whose birth we celebrate to-night. England a hundred years ago hated Scotland and all things Scotch, and was determined to denationalize the little Northern kingdom, if she could. She found just the right sort of material for her purpose in the nobles and ruling classes of the land. They were a miserable, mongrel lot, and had as little Scotch patriotism in their milk-and-water souls as their black cattle on the hills had. They thought it just the thing to become Londonized and spend there in riotous living the money wrung from their poor serfs in the North. To please the Royal House of Hanover they were willing to be the sycophants of creation and plan for the blotting of the word "Scotland" from the map, but

"The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men  
Gang aft agley,  
An' le've us nought but grief and pain  
For promised joy."

Though Scottish patriotism was at a low ebb among the upper classes in Scotland, that night when "a blast o' Januar win' blew hansel in on Robin," it was not so among the lower. [During a gale, the night Robin was born, a gust of wind blew the "auld clay biggin'" down, necessitating the removal of his mother and himself to a neighbouring hut]. The peasantry of the land kept green in memory the struggles of the fathers both for civil and religious liberty. They had, however, to speak in whispers when they referred to the relations of the two kingdoms. But a better day was dawning. The seed of old national history which his mother dropped into his cradle in ballad form sprouted forth grandly and made the pen of Robin more powerful than the sword of Wallace. When traitor, knave and coward-slave were bowing before "my lord" this, and "my lady" that in England, and were ashamed of the country they came from, the peasants' bard, weeding in the barley field, was a Scot still, and "turned the weeder clips aside and spared the symbol dear." The despised thistle was dear in his sight. What memories of other days clustered around it! How eloquently to his imagination it pled "for Scotland's King and law," making his bosom swell with patriotic feelings! Yes, he spared the symbol dear, all the more dear because of the contemptuous treatment received from those who should have been proud of it. But sparing the thistle and wetting it with his tears, he knew would serve but little his country's cause. He knew well that he must devise something that would arouse his countrymen to a sense of their dignity as a nation, and so prayed that he "for poor auld Scotland's sake some usefu' plan or beuk could make, or sing a song, at least." The song was sung. It swelled up from his soul like the sobbing, sorrowful patriotic outburst of the Hebrews by the rivers of Babylon, and when it died away from his lips it wandered among the valleys and lingered on the hill-side, arousing the ancient spirit of "Caledonia stern and wild" as nothing had before for

years. "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" was that song, and as it echoed and re-echoed from Maidenkirk to John O'Groat's, it made ploughmen in the fields and shepherds on the hills speak out in song what they dared not speak in prose, and walk as if their footstep laid "the proud usurpers low." That noble song was a grand conception, and would have immortalized the Ayrshire ploughboy if he had never composed another. It gives expression to the true inwardness of all worthy Scotchmen to-day, as it did the first day it was sung. It makes the patriotic fire burn in "the bones" and sparkle in the eyes. It helps to keep the spirit of human liberty abroad in the world as few other songs do. In Scotland it has enthused a new life into the body politic and a life, too, that will not die with the centuries coming. Never again will Scotchmen be ashamed of their country, but will proudly sing of all things Scotch as the bonniest and the best in all the British Isles. The preachers of the kirk had a hand, too, in the making of our poet. I am not going to abuse them. It seems to be a standing rule with a certain class of orators on these anniversary occasions to give a kick or two to men of whom they are apparently as ignorant as a frog is of astronomy. Ralph Waldo Emerson, speaking of Burns at a similar gathering to this a few years ago, said, "He came, and the ranting, canting, hypocritic auld gospel bigots hung their heads down to avoid him. He came down upon them like a thunderbolt, and cleared the air with his lightning." That sort of stuff might pass as a boy's composition at school, but it is not history. It is simply the ranting, canting ravings of either a narrow bigot or an ignoramus. The "auld light" ministers of Scotland a hundred years ago were neither bigots nor hypocrites as a class. They were the equal in learning, in liberality, in piety of any set of ministers in Christendom. They were the stuff the covenanters were made of, and that later on went to form the great Free Church of Scotland. It was their "thunder" and "lightning" that cleared the air intellectually, morally and spiritually, and not that of Burns. It was they, who, by their churches, schools and colleges, formed the

Scottish character into its granite sturdiness and manly independence. It was they who made it possible for the bard to write the "Cotter's Saturday Night." It was they who made the Sabbath a holy day, and family worship universal throughout the land. It was they who made Scotland "loved at home and revered abroad." It was they who produced in the homes of the lowly all that was beautiful in the days of Burns, and enabled him to sing "From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs." Yes, and largely to their forming hand is due the fact that Scotchmen of the present century are welcomed into every land where honest, canny folks are wanted. Shame on the spouters that insult Scotchmen at these gatherings by making an exhibition of their ignorance and bigotry at the expense of the grand old fathers of the Church of Scotland.

"O wad some power the giftie gie them,  
To see themselves as others see them;  
It wad frae monie a blunder free them,  
And foolish notion."

The ministers of the kirk, however, made a mistake that was everywhere common a hundred years ago; they neglected a very large part of man's nature—the part related to this world—while they strained to the utmost to exalt that related to the other. I mean that while they worked hard to lift their fellows up to God and heaven, they ignored as sinful all the instincts of the heart, joys of the imagination, and social relationships of life. To them the book of Nature was a closed book. The Book of Revelation was always open, and it said man was cursed and the world on his account, and that settled it. Everything and every creature was cursed. The flower in the field, the tree in the forest, the pebble on the shore, and the star in the sky—everything in heaven, earth, or sea—was cursed because of Adam. This literalism was the general style of preaching everywhere at the time. The toilers in the field felt that the preaching of the first day of the week was not in harmony with the preaching of hill and dale, lake and stream, on the following six. And as for the social joys and pleasures of pure humanity, they felt they were from above rather than from below.



The result was—Burns. He sung out from Nature's own heart. The people heard him with rapture, and he has been to them ever since Nature's high priest, revealing to them "visions from the hills, and the souls of lonely places."

Baalim's idolatry produced Elijah; the condition of things at Rome, Luther; the tyranny of London, George Washington; and the high-pressure spiritualism of the Scottish pulpit, Burns. The terrible "groanings of creation" preached from the pulpit on the Sabbath were turned into sweetest songs of nature to him when he wandered abroad and heard the "wood-notes wild." He could see no curse in any "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower" or "cow'rin timor'us beastie," or in stream as

"Owre a linn the burnie plays,  
As through the glen it wimplet."

From sky, earth, and sea came to him voices, not full of curse or cursing, but blessing. It was this going to extreme on the part of the ministers of the kirks, with a "few Holy Willies" among the eldership to boot, that made the satirical effusions bubble up from the humorous soul of Robbie Burns.

We do not claim that he was a saint; we know that he had "passions wild and strong," like a certain other "sweet singer," but with all his faults he respected and revered what was true and real in religion. Burns, in his relation to religion, is a standing illustration of how providence punishes this pushing to extremes, even in holy things. Let Burns have his due; let also justice be done to the much-abused Presbyterian ministers of Scotland of the days of Burns.

The miserable condition of the class into which he was born also aided in the development of Scotia's bard. The peasantry of Scotland at this time were among the poorest on the face of the earth. Their poverty, however, was not owing to idleness or dissipation; and as the noblest bird comes from the poorest nest, many have risen high as soldiers, statesmen and scholars, as the annals of Scottish history will show, from this very class. The hardy sons of rustic toil in the "land o' cakes," though poor, were a pious, manly, virtuous race. That there were no "Tam o' Shanter's" or "Souter Johnnies"

among them would be too much to say; yet, on the authority of the most reliable historians, they were the best of their class, at the time, in any land.

Burns was of this people. He experienced their joys and sorrows. In childhood he knew what it was to romp and laugh and play around the "wee bit ingle blinkin bonnily," to kneel down to heaven's eternal king while "the saint, the father and the husband prayed," and to sup "the halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food."

In youth he knew what it was to toil beside the lowly tillers of the soil, and in after years to weep with them because of brutal letters from land stewards and bailiffs. Their condition touched him to the core of the heart, and caused him to strike his harp to their praise in notes almost divine. He loved his people with a love like that of David for Jonathan, and their sad condition drew from his sympathetic heart poetic strains surpassed by no uninspired mortal. What is more sublime than "The Cottar's Saturday Night," where he depicts "the lowly train in life's sequestered scene, the native feelings strong, the guileless ways;" or "Man was made to mourn," where you read with a lump in the throat—

"See yonder poor o'erlaboured wight,  
So abject, mean and vile,  
Who begs a brother of the earth  
To give him leave to toil:  
And see his lordly fellow worm  
The poor petition spurn,  
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife  
And helpless offspring mourn."

or that inspiring, matchless song, that has so cheered human effort, where he sings:—

"We daur be poor for a' that,  
For a' that and a' that  
Our toils obscure and a' that,  
The rank is but the guinea stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that."

But his great and generous heart not only felt for the poor in their poverty and wept for suffering humanity at large, but was touched with kindly sympathy for all the creatures of God in misfortune. The mountain daisy crushed "Amang the stoure," the mouse, when its "wee bit housie," "o' leaves and stibble," was upturned by the plough, and it was set adrift a homeless creature in the cold



of winter ; the wounded hare, limping in search of a bed to die in ; the "ourie cattle" shelterless in the winter's blast ; the "wee helpless birdie" "wi' chittering wing," closing its e'e in the cold stormy night ; "Mailie," his poor pet sheep, bleating in the ditch ; and his "auld mare, Maggie," that once did "prance wi' muckle pride," but now so "dowie, stiff and crazy," all moved him deeply and had in him a true and loving friend that would have made them glad if he could. Even the "Deil," "Auld Nickie-ben," was an object of pity, and calls from him the following pathetic address :—

"O wad ye tak a thought and men' !  
Ye aiblins micht—I dinna ken—still hae a stake ;  
I'm wae to think upon you den,  
Even for your sake."

Thus it was always with him. He was powerfully affected by the miseries of man, of beast and bird ; also by the changing moods, the apparent joys and sorrows of inanimate nature around him. Every chord of his breast vibrated to the touch of prosperity or misfortune, of gladness or gloom, and gave forth strains sweet as ever from æolian harp, and which shall not be forgotten so long as there is a living Scot on top of earth.

His great love for "bonnie Jean" was a forming power, too, that must not be forgotten. Some will claim that his love for "Highland Mary" was more powerful than that for Jean Armour. This, however, is doubtful. It is true that he produced poetic genius that will last as long as the English language, while under the spell of the Highland lassie, yet he probably tells the exact truth when he says :—

"When a' the fairest maids are met,  
The fairest maid was Bonnie Jean."

And again :—

"The powers aboon can only ken  
To whom the heart is seen,  
That nane can be sae dear to me  
As my sweet, lovely Jean."

It was of her, too, he sung :—

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,  
I dearly lo'e the West,  
For there the bonnie lassie lives  
The lass that I lo'e best."

We know that "Robin was a roaming boy ;" at the same time it is more than likely that

she who became his wife had greater charms to him than any other woman living or dead. Certain parties called to see her once, and when she opened the door, it is said, they expressed their surprise that the poet should have sung so sweetly about her charms, as they could see no beauty in her. "Ah," she said in reply, "if you could see me with Robert's eyes, ye would see in me what he does." Aye that's it.

Let us not forget to do honour to the memory of "Bonnie Jean" when we sing the praises of Robbie Burns. She suffered much for his sake ; but her gentleness and sweetness of temper had a great influence over him, and inspired him to write some of the most charming things in her praise.

But natural scenery, the religious, political, and social conditions of his country, capped by the charms of his bonnie Jean, did not, of themselves, make the poet Robert Burns. The root of the matter was in himself : these simply helped to draw it out. He was born a poet, and the best, in some respects, God ever gave to cheer by song this "vale of tears." He was no book-made rhymmer. His poetry is no mere surface, sparkling froth. In his great soul the muses placed a bubbling spring of pure poetry, and fed it from the highest and holiest peaks of Parnassus.

We thank the Giver of All Good for Robert Burns. The world is richer to-day because of him.

It is said that he who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before is a benefactor of the race. Burns has made a thousand joys spring up in the field of poesy where only one existed before he entered it. His songs are sung the world over, and his poems are highly prized by all nations. Especially dear are both songs and poems to the weary-footed, homesick Scot in foreign lands. "Auld Lang Syne," and kindred songs, are as dear to him as the apple of the eye, pure as the dew of the morning, and sweet as the breath of spring. Yes, and they will continue to be so while the human bosom swells at the thoughts of fatherland, the sympathetic cord vibrates that links man to the worm below and the angel above him, while lads and lassies love one another, while flows the bonnie Doon, or grows the gowan

on the brae, the heather on the moor, and the "birks o' Aberfeldy."

Then let the memory of Scotland's bard be honoured the world round to-night. Let his name be loved and revered while the sun shall endure. Let his follies, with tearful eye, be hid in the darkness of night forever, and his sins be buried in a grave as unknown as the grave of Moses. But let his virtues, his genius, his patriotism, be held in everlasting remembrance, his sweet lyrics sung while birds make melody by the banks of the Doon, the Ayr, or the Nith.

Thank God for the man that has contri-

buted so much to the pleasures of humanity, that has inspired so much hope in the bosom of despair, and exalted honest toil in the face of the haughty idlers and the aristocratic drones of society. Mourn over the fates that decreed the miseries of his life.

Stormy, indeed, was the sea on which he had to sail his trembling bark from first to last; but let us hope that when, with riven sails and broken spars and shattered beam, he dropped anchor along the stormless shores of eternity, his great, sad, heroic soul was given a quiet nook in the summer land of song.

### XXXI.—ROBERT BURNS.

*Two Addresses by LORD ROSEBURY.*

Delivered at Dumfries and Glasgow on the Centenary of the Poet's Death, 21st July, 1896.

On the morning of the 21st of July LORD ROSEBURY received at the poet's tomb wreaths brought by deputations from all parts of the world. At two o'clock he delivered the following Address in the DRILL HALL at DUMFRIES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I come here as a loyal burghess of Dumfries to do honour to the greatest burghess of Dumfries. You, Mr. Provost, have laid upon me a great distinction but a great burden. Your most illustrious burghess obtained privileges for his children in respect of his burghess-ship, but you impose on your youngest burghess an honour that might well break anybody's back—that of attempting to do justice in any shape or fashion to the hero of to-day's ceremony. But we citizens of Dumfries have a special claim to be considered on this day. We are surrounded by the choicest and the most sacred haunts of the poet. You have in this town the house in which he died, the "Globe," where we could have wished that some phonograph had then existed which could have communicated to us some of his wise and witty and wayward talk. You have the street commemorated in M'Culloch's tragic anecdote when Burns was shunned by his former friends, and you have the paths by the Nith which are associated with some of his greatest work. You have near you the room in which the whistle was

contended for, and in which, if mere legend is to be trusted, the immortal Dr. Gregory was summoned to administer his first powders to the survivors of that memorable debauch. You have the stackyard in which, lying on his back and contemplating—

"Thou lingering star, with lessening ray,  
That lov'st to greet the early morn,"

he wrote the lines to "Mary in Heaven"—perhaps the most pathetic of his poems. You have near you the walk by the river, where, in his transport, he passed his wife and children without seeing them, "his brow flushed and his eyes shining" with the lustre of "Tam o' Shanter." "I wish you had but seen him," said his wife; "he was in such ecstasy that the tears were happing down his cheeks." That is why we are in Dumfries to-day. We come to honour Burns among these immortal haunts of his.

But it is not in Dumfries alone that he is commemorated to-day; for all Scotland will pay her tribute. And this, surely, is but right. Mankind owes him a general debt. But the debt of Scotland is special. For Burns exalted our race, he hallowed Scotland and the Scottish tongue. Before his time we had for a long period been scarcely recognised, we had been falling out of the recollection of the world. From the time of the union of the Crowns, and still more from the

time of the legislative union, Scotland had lapsed into obscurity. Except for an occasional riot or a Jacobite rising, her existence was almost forgotten. She had, indeed, her Robertsons and her Humes writing history to general admiration, but no trace of Scottish authorship was discoverable in their works; indeed, every flavour of national idiom was carefully excluded. The Scottish dialect, as Burns called it, was in danger of perishing. Burns seemed at this juncture to start to his feet and re-assert Scotland's claim to national existence; his Scottish notes rang through the world, and he thus preserved the Scottish language for ever; for mankind will never allow to die that idiom in which his songs and poems are enshrined. That is a part of Scotland's debt to Burns.

But this is much more than a Scottish demonstration; it is a collection of representatives from all quarters of the globe to own a common allegiance and a common faith. It is not only Scotsmen honouring the greatest of Scotsmen—we stretch far beyond a kingdom or a race—we are rather a sort of poetical Mohammedans gathered at a sort of poetical Mecca.

And yet we are assembled in our high enthusiasm under circumstances which are somewhat paradoxical. For with all the appearance of joy, we celebrate not a festival, but a tragedy. It is not the sunrise but the sunset that we commemorate. It is not the birth of a new power into the world, the subtle germ of a fame that is to survive and inspire the generations of men; but it is perhaps more fitting that we celebrate the end and not the beginning. For the coming of these figures is silent; it is their disappearance that we know. At this instant that I speak there may be born into the world the equal of a Newton or a Cæsar, but half of us would be dead before he had revealed himself. Their death is different. It may be gloomy and disastrous; it may come at a moment of shame or neglect; but by that time the man has carved his name somewhere on the Temple of Fame. There are exceptions, of course; cases where the end comes before the slightest, or any but the slightest, recognition—Chatterton choking in his garret, hunger of body and soul all un-

satisfied; Millet selling his pictures for a song; nay, Shakespeare himself. But, as a rule, death in the case of genius closes the first act of a public drama; criticism and analysis may then begin their unbiassed work free from jealousy or friendship or personal consideration for the living. Then comes the third act, if third act there be.

No, it is a death, not a birth, that we celebrate. This day a century ago, in poverty, delirium, and distress, there was passing the soul of Robert Burns. To him death comes in clouds and darkness, the end of a long agony of body and soul; he is harassed with debt, his bodily constitution is ruined, his spirit is broken, his wife is daily expecting her confinement. He has lost almost all that rendered his life happy—much of friendship, credit, and esteem. Some score years before, one of the most charming of English writers, as he lay dying, was asked if his mind was at ease, and with his last breath Oliver Goldsmith owned that it was not. So it was with Robert Burns. His delirium dwelt on the horrors of a jail; he uttered curses on the tradesman who was pursuing him for debt. "What business," said he to his physician in a moment of consciousness, "what business has a physician to waste his time upon me; I am a poor pigeon not worth plucking. Alas! I have not feathers enough to carry me to my grave." For a year or more his health had been failing. He had a poet's body as well as a poet's mind; nervous, feverish, impressionable; and his constitution, which, if nursed and regulated, might have carried him to the limit of life, was unequal to the storm and stress of dissipation and a preying mind. In the previous autumn he had been seized with a rheumatic attack; his digestion had given way; he was sunk in melancholy and gloom. In his last April he wrote to his friend Thomson, "By Babel's streams I've sate and wept almost ever since I saw you last; I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain. Rheumatism, cold, and fever have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope." It was sought to revive him



by sea-bathing, and he went to stay at Brownell. There he remained three weeks, but was under no delusion as to his state. "Well, madam," he said to Mrs. Riddell on arriving, "have you any commands for the other world?" He sat that evening with his old friend, and spoke manfully of his approaching death, of the fate of his children, and his fame; sometimes indulging in bitter-sweet pleasantry, but never losing the consciousness of his condition. In three weeks he wearied of the fruitless hunt for health, and he returned home to die. He was only just in time. When he re-entered his home on the 18th he could no longer stand; he was soon delirious; in three days he was dead. "On the fourth day," we are told, "when his attendant held a cordial to his lips, he swallowed it eagerly, rose almost wholly up, spread out his hands, sprang forward nigh the whole length of the bed, fell on his face, and expired."

I suppose there are many who can read the account of these last months with composure. They are more fortunate than I. There is nothing much more melancholy in all biography. The brilliant poet, the delight of all society, from the highest to the lowest, sits brooding in silence over the drama of his spent life; the early innocent home, the plough and the savour of fresh-turned earth, the silent communion with nature and his own heart, the brief hour of splendour, the dark hour of neglect, the mad struggle for forgetfulness, the bitterness of vanished homage, the gnawing doubt of fame, the distressful future of his wife and children—an endless witch-dance of thought without clue or remedy, all perplexing, all soon to end while he is yet young, as men reckon youth; though none know so well as he that his youth is gone, his race is run, his message is delivered.

His death revived the flagging interest and pride that had been felt for him. As usual, men began to realise what they had lost when it was too late. When it was known that he was dying the townspeople had shown anxiety and distress. They recalled his fame and forgot his fall. One man was heard to ask, with a touch of quaint simplicity, "Who do you think will be our poet

now?" The district set itself to prepare a public funeral for the poet who died penniless among them. A vast concourse followed him to his grave. The awkward squad, as he had foreseen and deprecated, fired volleys over his coffin. The streets were lined with soldiers, among them one who, within sixteen years, was to be Prime Minister. And while the procession wended its gloomy way, as if no element of tragedy were to be wanting, his widow's hour of travail arrived, and she gave birth to the hapless child that had caused the father so much misgiving. In this place and on this day it all seems present to us—the house of anguish, the thronged churchyard, the weeping neighbours. We feel ourselves part of the mourning crowd. We hear those dropping volleys and that muffled drum; we bow our heads as the coffin passes, and acknowledge with tears the inevitable doom. Pass, heavy hearse, with thy weary freight of shattered hopes and exhausted frame; pass, with thy simple pomp of fatherless bairns and sad moralising friends; pass, with the sting of death to the victory of the grave; pass, with the perishable, and leave us the eternal.

It is rare to be fortunate in life; it is infinitely rarer to be fortunate in death. "Happy in the occasion of his death," as Tacitus said of Agricola, is not a common epitaph. It is comparatively easy to know how to live, but it is beyond all option and choice to compass the more difficult art of knowing when and how to die. We can generally, by looking back, choose a moment in a man's life when he had been fortunate had he dropped down dead. And so the question arises naturally to-day, was Burns fortunate in his death—that death which we commemorate? There can, I fancy, be only one answer; it was well that he died when he did; it might even have been better for himself had he died a little earlier. The terrible letters that he wrote two years before to Mrs. Riddell and Mr. Cunningham betokened a spirit mortally wounded. In those last two years the cloud settles, never to be lifted. "My constitution and frame were *ab origine* blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria which poisons my existence." He found perhaps some pleasure in the com-



position of his songs, some occasional relief in the society of boon companions ; but the world was fading before him.

There is an awful expression in Scotland which one never hears without a pang—"So-and-so is *done*," meaning that he is physically worn out. Burns was "*done*." He was struggling on like a wounded deer to his death. He had often faced the end, and not unwillingly. "Can it be possible," he once wrote to Mrs. Dunlop, "that when I resign this frail feverish being I shall still find myself in conscious existence? When the last gasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those who know me and the few who loved me ; when the cold unconscious corse is resigned to the earth to be the prey of reptiles and become a trodden clod, shall I be yet warm in life, enjoying or enjoyed?" Surely that reads as if he foresaw this day and would fain be with us,—as indeed he may be. Twelve years before he had faced death in a less morbid spirit :—

"Why [he asked] am I loath to leave this earthly scene?

Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?

Some days of joy, with draughts of ill between,

Some gleams of sunshine, 'mid renewing storms."

He had, perhaps, never enjoyed life so much as is supposed, though he had turned to it a brave, cheerful, unflinching face, and the last years had been years of misery. "God have mercy on me," he wrote years before the end, "a poor damned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imagination, agonising sensibility, and bedlam passions." There was truth in this outburst. At any rate, his most devoted friends—and to be an admirer of Burns is to be his friend—may wish that he had not lived to write the letter to Mr. Clark, piteously pleading that a harmless toast may not be visited hardly upon him ; or that to Mrs. Riddell, beginning—"I write you from the regions of hell and the horrors of the damned ;" or to be harried by his official superiors as a political suspect ; shunned by his fashionable friends for the same reason ; wandering like a neglected ghost in Dumfries, avoided and ignored. "That's all over now, my young friend," he said, speaking of his reign in society, "and warena my heart licht I wad

dec." All this was in 1794. Had he died before then, it might have been happier for himself, and we should have lost some parts of his life which we would rather forget ; but posterity could not have spared him ; we could not have lost the exquisite songs which we owe to those years ; but, above all, the supreme creed and comfort which he bequeathed to the world—

"A man's a man for a' that,"

would have remained undelivered.

One may, perhaps, go further and say that poets—or those whom the gods love—should die young. This is a hard saying, but it will not greatly affect the bills of mortality. And it applies only to poets of the first rank ; while even here it has its exceptions, and illustrious exceptions they are. But surely the best poetry is produced before middle age, before the morning and its illusions have faded, before the heaviness of noon and the baleful cool of evening. Few men, too, can bear the strain of a poet's temperament through many years. At any rate, we may feel sure of this, that Burns had produced his best, that he would never again have produced a "Tam o' Shanter," or a "Cottar's Saturday Night," or a "Jolly Beggars," and that long before his death, though he could still write lines affluent with tenderness and grace, "the hand of pain and sorrow and care," to use his own words, "had lain heavy upon" him.

And this leads to another point. To-day is not merely the melancholy anniversary of death, but the rich and incomparable fulfilment of prophecy. For this is the moment to which Burns looked when he said to his wife—"Don't be afraid ; I'll be more respected a hundred years after I am dead than I am at present!" To-day the hundred years are completed, and we can judge of the prediction. On that point we must all be unanimous. Burns had honour in his lifetime, but his fame had rolled like a snowball since his death, and it rolls on. There is, indeed, no parallel to it in the world ; it sets the calculations of compound interest at defiance. He is not merely the watchword of a nation that carries and implants Burns-worship all over the globe as birds carry seeds, but he has become the champion and patron

saint of Democracy. He bears the banner of the essential equality of man. His birthday is celebrated—137 years after its occurrence—more universally than that of any human being. He reigns over a greater dominion than any empire that the world has ever seen. Nor does the ardour of his devotees decrease. Ayr and Ellisland, Mauchline and Dumfries, are the shrines of countless pilgrims. Burns statues are a hardy annual. The production of Burns manuscripts was a lucrative branch of industry until it was checked by untimely intervention. The editions of Burns are as the sands of the sea. No canonised name in the calendar excites so blind and enthusiastic a worship. Whatever Burns may have contemplated in his prediction, whatever dream he may have fondled in the wildest moments of elation, must have fallen utterly short of the reality. And it is all spontaneous. There is no puff, no advertisement, no manipulation. Intellectual cosmetics of that kind are frail and fugitive; they rarely survive their subject; they would not have availed here. Nor was there any glamour attached to the poet;

rather the reverse. He has stood by himself; he has grown by himself. It is himself and no other that we honour.

But what had Burns in his mind when he made this prediction? It might be whimsically urged that he was conscious that the world had not yet seen his masterpiece, for the "Jolly Beggars" was not published till some time after his death. But that would not be sufficient, for he had probably forgotten its existence. Nor do I think he spoke at haphazard. What were perhaps present to his mind were the fickleness of his contemporaries towards him, his conviction of the essential splendour of his work, the consciousness that the incidents of his later years had unjustly obscured him, and that his true figure would be perceived as these fell away into forgetfulness or were measured at their true value. If so, he was right in his judgment, for his life began with his death; with the body passed all that was gross and impure; the clear spirit stood revealed; and soared at once to its accepted place among the fixed stars, in the firmament of the rare immortals.

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In the evening at eight o'clock LORD ROSEBURY delivered the following Address in the ST. ANDREW'S HALL at GLASGOW.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, we are here to-day to celebrate Burns. What the direct connection of Burns with Glasgow may be I am not exactly sure; but, at any rate, I am confident of this, that in the great metropolis of the West there is a clear claim that we should celebrate the genius of Robert Burns. I have celebrated it already elsewhere. I cannot, perhaps, deny that the day has been a day of labour, but it has been a labour of love. It is, and it must be, a source of joy and pride to us to see our champion Scotsman receive the honour and admiration and affection of humanity; to see, as I have seen this morning, the long processions bringing homage and tribute to the conquering dead. But these have only been signs and symptoms of the world-wide passion of reverence and devotion. That generous and immortal

soul pervades the universe to-day. In the humming city and in the crowd of man; in the backwood and in the swamp; where the sentinel paces the bleak frontier, and where the sailor smokes his evening pipe; and above all, where the farmer and his men pursue their summer toil, whether under the Stars and Stripes or under the Union Jack—the thought and sympathy of men are directed to Robert Burns.

I have sometimes asked myself, if a roll-call of fame were read over at the beginning of every century, how many men of eminence would answer a second time to their names. But of our poet there is no doubt or question. The *adsum* of Burns rings out clear and unchallenged. There are few before him on the list, and we cannot now conceive a list without him. He towers high, and yet he lived in an age when the average was sublime.

It sometimes seems to me as if the whole

eighteenth century was a constant preparation for, a constant working up to, the great drama of the revolution which closed it. The scenery is all complete when the time arrives—the dark volcanic country; the hungry desperate people; the firefly nobles; the concentrated splendour of the Court—in the midst, in her place as heroine, the dazzling Queen. And during long previous years brooding nature had been producing not merely the immediate actors, but figures worthy of the scene. What a glittering procession it is! We can only mark some of the principal figures. Burke leads the way; then come Fox and Goethe; Nelson and Mozart; Schiller, Pitt, and Burns; Wellington and Napoleon. And among these Titans, Burns is a conspicuous figure, the figure which appeals most of all to the imagination and affection of mankind. Napoleon looms larger to the imagination, but on the affection he has no hold. It is in the combination of the two powers that Burns is supreme.

What is his secret? We are always discussing him and endeavouring to find it out. Perhaps, like the latent virtue of some medicinal baths, it may never be satisfactorily explained. But, at any rate, let us discuss him again. That is, I presume, our object to-night. What pleasanter or more familiar occupation can there be for Scotsmen? But the Scotsmen who enjoy it have generally perhaps more time than I. Pardon then the imperfections of my speech, for I speak of a subject which no one can altogether compass, and which a busy man has perhaps no right to attempt.

The clue to Burns's extraordinary hold on mankind is possibly a complicated one; it has, perhaps, many developments. If so, we have not time to consider it to-night. But I personally believe the causes are, like most great causes, simple; though it might take long to point out all the ways in which they operate. The secret, as it seems to me, lies in two words—inspiration and sympathy. But, if I wished to prove my contention, I should go on quoting from his poems all night, and his admirers would still declare that I had omitted the best passages. I know that profuse quotation is a familiar form of a Burns speech; but I am afraid to

begin lest I should not end, and I am sure that I should not satisfy. I must proceed then in a more summary way.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, there seem to me to be two great natural forces in British literature. I use the safe adjective of British, and your applause shows me that I was right to do so. I use it partly because hardly any of Burns's poetry is strictly English; partly because he hated, and was perhaps the first to protest against, the use of the word English as including Scottish. Well, I say, there are in that literature two great forces of which the power seems sheer inspiration and nothing else—I mean Shakespeare and Burns. This is not the place or the time to speak of that miracle called Shakespeare, but one must say a word of the miracle called Burns.

Try and reconstruct Burns as he was. A peasant, born in a cottage that no sanitary inspector in these days would tolerate for a moment; struggling with desperate effort against pauperism, almost in vain; snatching at scraps of learning in the intervals of toil, as it were with his teeth; a heavy silent lad, proud of his ploughing. All of a sudden, without preface or warning, he breaks out into exquisite song, like a nightingale from the brushwood, and continues singing as sweetly—with nightingale pauses—till he dies. A nightingale sings because he cannot help it; he can only sing exquisitely, because he knows no other. So it was with Burns. What is this but inspiration? One can no more measure or reason about it than measure or reason about Niagara.

Under the limitations which I have imposed on myself to-night, we must take for granted the incomparable excellence of his poetry. But I must ask you to remember that the poetry is only a fragment of Burns. Amazing as it may seem, all contemporary testimony is unanimous that the man was far more wonderful than his works. "It will be the misfortune of Burns's reputation," writes an accomplished lady, who might well have judged him harshly, "in the records of literature, not only to future generations and to foreign countries, but even with his native Scotland and a number of his contemporaries, that he has been regarded as a poet, and nothing but a poet. . . . Poetry," she



continues, "(I appeal to all who had the advantage of being personally acquainted with him) was actually not his forte. . . . None, certainly, ever outshone Burns in the charms—the sorcery, I would almost call it—of fascinating conversation, the spontaneous eloquence of social argument, or the unstudied poignancy of brilliant repartee." And she goes on to describe the almost superhuman fascination of his voice and of his eyes, those balls of black fire which electrified all on whom they rested.

It seems strange to be told that it would be an injustice to judge Burns by his poetry alone; but as to the magnetism of his presence and conversation there is only one verdict. "No man's conversation ever carried me so completely off my feet," said the Duchess of Gordon—the friend of Pitt and of the London wits, the queen of Scottish society. Dugald Stewart says that "all the faculties of Burns's mind were, so far as I could judge, equally vigorous, and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities." And of his prose compositions the same severe judge speaks thus—"Their great and varied excellences render some of them scarcely less objects of wonder than his poetical performances. The late Dr. Robertson used to say that, considering his education, the former seemed to him the more remarkable of the two." "I think Burns," said Principal Robertson to a friend, "was one of the most extraordinary men I ever met with. His poetry surprised me very much, his prose surprised me still more, and his conversation surprised me more than both his poetry and prose." We are told, too, that "he felt a strong call towards oratory, and all who heard him speak—and some of them were excellent judges—admitted his wonderful quickness of apprehension and readiness of eloquence." All this seems to me marvellous. It surely ratifies the claim of inspiration without the necessity of quoting a line of his poetry.

I pass then to his sympathy. If his talents

were universal, his sympathies were not less so. His tenderness was not a mere selfish tenderness for his own family, for he loved all mankind except the cruel and the base. Nay, we may go further and say that he placed all creation, especially the suffering and despised part of it, under his protection. The oppressor in every shape, even in the comparatively innocent embodiment of the factor and the sportsman, he regarded with direct and personal hostility. But above all he saw the charm of the home; he recognised it as the basis of all society, he honoured it in its humblest form, for he knew, as few know, how unpretentiously, but how sincerely, the family in the cottage is welded by mutual love and esteem. "I recollect once," said Dugald Stewart, speaking of Burns, "he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and worth which they contained." He dwells repeatedly on the primary sacredness of the home and the family, the responsibility of fatherhood and marriage. "Have I not," he once wrote to Lord Mar, "a more precious stake in my country's welfare than the richest dukedom in it? I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more." The lines in which he tells his faith are not less memorable than the stately stanzas in which Gray sings the "short and simple annals of the poor." I must quote them again, often quoted as they are—

"To mak' a happy fireside clime  
To weans and wife,  
That's the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life."

His verses, then, go straight to the heart of every home; they appeal to every father and mother. But that is only the beginning, perhaps the foundation, of his sympathy. There is something for everybody in Burns. He has a heart even for vermin; he has pity even for the arch-enemy of mankind. And his universality makes his poems a treasure-house in which all may find what they want. Every wayfarer in the journey of life may pluck strength and courage from it as he passes.



The sore, the weary, the wounded, will all find something to heal and soothe. For this great master is the universal Samaritan. Where the priest and the Levite may have passed by in vain, this eternal heart will still afford a resource. But he is not only for the sick in spirit. The friend, the lover, the patriot, will all find their choicest refreshment in Burns. His touch is everywhere, and it is everywhere the touch of genius. Nothing comes amiss to him. What was said of the debating power of his eminent contemporary, Dundas, may be said of his poetry—"He went out in all weathers." And it may be added that all weathers suited him; that he always brought back something precious, something we cherish, something that cannot die.

He is, then, I think, the universal friend in an unique sense. But he was, poetically speaking, the special friend of Scotland, in a sense which recalls a profound remark of another eminent Scotsman, I mean Fletcher of Saltoun. In an account of a conversation between Lord Cromarty, Sir Edward Seymour, Sir Christopher Musgrave, and himself, Fletcher writes—"I said I knew a very wise man, so much of Sir Christopher's sentiment that he believed if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." This may be rudely paraphrased, that it is more important to make the songs of a nation than to frame its laws, and this again may be interpreted to mean that in the days of Fletcher, at any rate, as in the days of Burns, it is the familiar songs of a people that mould their thoughts, their manners, and their morals. If this be true, can we exaggerate the debt that we Scotsmen owe to Burns? He has bequeathed to his country the most exquisite casket of songs in the world; primarily to his country, though others cannot be denied their share. I will give only one example, but that is a signal one. From distant Roumania the queen of that country wrote to Dumfries to-day that she has no copy of Burns with her, but that she knows his songs by heart.

We must remember, too, that there is more than this to be said. Many of Burns's songs were already in existence in the lips

and minds of the people—rough and coarse and obscene. Our benefactor takes them, and with a touch of inspired alchemy transmutes them and leaves them pure gold. He loved the old catches and the old tunes, and into these gracious moulds he poured his exquisite gifts of thought and expression. But for him, those ancient airs, often wedded to words which no decent man could recite, would have perished from that corruption if not from neglect. He rescued them for us by his songs, and in doing so he hallowed the life and sweetened the breath of Scotland.

I have also used the words patriot and lover. These draw me to different lines of thought. The word "patriot" leads me to the political side of Burns. There is no doubt that he was suspected of being a politician; and he is even said to have sometimes wished to enter Parliament. That was perhaps an excusable aberration, and my old friend Professor Masson has, I think, surmised that had he lived he might have been a great Liberal pressman. My frail thought shall not dally with such surmise, but it conducts us naturally to the subject of Burns's politics. From his sympathy for his own class, from his indignation against nobles like the Duke of Queensberry, and from the toasts that cost him so dear, it might be considered easy to infer his political opinions. But Burns should not be claimed for any party. A poet, be it remembered, is never a politician, and a politician is never a poet—that is to say, a politician is never so fortunate as to be a poet, and a poet is so fortunate as never to be a politician. I do not say that the line of demarcation is never passed—a politician may have risen for a moment, or a poet may have descended; but where there is any confusion between the two callings, it is generally because the poet thinks he discerns, or the politician thinks he needs, something higher than politics. Burns's politics were entirely governed by his imagination. He was at once a Jacobite and a Jacobin. He had the sad sympathy which most of us have felt for the hapless house of Stuart, without the least wish to be governed by it. He had much the same sort of abstract sympathy with the French

Revolution, when it was setting all Europe to rights; but he was prepared to lay down his life to prevent its putting this island to rights. And then came his official superiors of the Excise, who, notwithstanding Mr. Pitt's admiration of his poetry, snuffed out his politics without remorse.

The name of Pitt leads me to add that Burns had some sort of relation with three Prime Ministers. Colonel Jenkinson, of the Cinque Ports Fencible Cavalry—afterwards Minister for fifteen years under the title of Liverpool—was on duty at Burns's funeral, though we are told—the good man—that he disapproved of the poet, and declined to make his acquaintance. Pitt, again, passed on Burns one of his rare and competent literary judgments, so eulogistic, indeed, that one wonders that a powerful Minister could have allowed one whom he admired so much to exist on an exciseman's pay when well, and an exciseman's half-pay when dying. And from Addington, another Prime Minister, Burns elicited a sonnet, which, in the Academy of Lagado, would surely have been held a signal triumph of the art of extracting sunshine from cucumbers.

So much for politics in the party sense. "A man's a man for a' that" is not politics—it is the assertion of the rights of humanity in a sense far wider than politics. It erects all mankind; it is the charter of its self-respect. It binds, it heals, it revives, it invigorates; it sets the bruised and broken on their legs, it refreshes the stricken soul, it is the salve and tonic of character; it cannot be narrowed into politics. Burns's politics are indeed nothing but the occasional overflow of his human sympathy into past history and current events.

And now, having discussed the two trains of thought suggested by the words "friend" and "patriot," I come to the more dangerous word "lover." There is an eternal controversy which, it appears, no didactic oil will ever assuage, as to Burns's private life and morality. Some maintain that these have nothing to do with his poems; some maintain that his life must be read into his works, and here again some think that his life damns his poems, while others aver that his poems cannot be fully appreciated without his life.

Another school thinks that his vices have been exaggerated, while their opponents scarcely think such exaggeration possible. It is impossible to avoid taking a side. I walk on the ashes, knowing the fire beneath, and unable to avoid it, for the topic is inevitable. I must confess myself, then, one of those who think that the life of Burns doubles the interest of his poems, and I doubt whether the failings of his life have been much exaggerated, for contemporary testimony on that point is strong; though a high authority, Mr. Wallace, has recently taken the other side with much power and point.

But the life of Burns, which I love to read with his poems, does not consist in his vices; they lie outside it. It is a life of work, and truth, and tenderness. And though, like all lives, it has its light and shade, remember that we know it all, the worst as well as the best. His was a soul bathed in crystal, he hurried to avow everything. There was no reticence in him. The only obscure passage in his life is the love passage with Highland Mary, and as to that he was silent not from shame, but because it was a sealed and sacred episode. "What a flattering idea," he once wrote, "is a world to come! There shall I with speechless agony of rapture again recognise my lost, my ever dear Mary! whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy, and love." He had, as the French say, the defects of his qualities. His imagination was a supreme and celestial gift. But his imagination often led him wrong, and never more than with women. The chivalry that made Don Quixote see the heroic in all the common events of life made Burns (as his brother tells us) see a goddess in every girl that he approached. Hence many love affairs, and some guilty ones; but even these must be judged with reference to time and circumstance. This much is certain, that had he been devoid of genius they would not have attracted attention. It is Burns's pedestal that affords a target. And why, one may ask, is not the same measure meted out to Burns as to others? The bastards of great captains and statesmen and princes are treated as historical and ornamental incidents. They strut the scene of Shakespeare,

and ruff it with the best. It is for the unlawful children of Burns, though he and his wife cherished them as if born in wedlock, that the vials of wrath are reserved. Take two brilliant figures, both of royal ancestry, who were alive during Burns's life. We occupy ourselves endlessly and severely with the lapses of Burns. We heave an elegant sigh over the kindred frailties of Charles James Fox and Charles Edward Stuart.

Again, it is quite clear that, though exceptionally sober in his earlier years, he drank too much in later life. But this, it must be remembered, was but an occasional condescendence to the vice and habit of the age. The gentry who pressed him to their houses, and who were all convivial, have much to answer for. His admirers who thronged to see him, and who could only conveniently sit with him in a tavern, are also responsible for this habit, so perilously attractive to men of genius. From the decorous Addison and the brilliant Bolingbroke onward, the eighteenth century records hard drinking as the common incident of intellectual eminence. To a man who had shone supreme in the most glowing society, and who was now an exciseman in a country town, with a home that cannot have been very exhilarating, and with a nervous system highly strung, the temptation of the warm tavern, and the admiring circle there, may well have been almost irresistible. Some attempt to say that his intemperance was exaggerated. I neither affirm nor deny. It was not as a sot he drank; that no one insinuated; if he succumbed, it was to good fellowship.

Remember, I do not seek to palliate or excuse, and, indeed, none will be turned to dissipation by Burns's example; he paid too dearly for it. But I will say this, that it all seems infinitely little, infinitely remote. Why do we strain, at this distance, to discern this dim spot on the poet's mantle. Shakespeare and Ben Jonson took their cool tankard at the Mermaid; we cannot afford, in the strictest view of literary responsibility, to quarrel with them for that. When we consider Pitt and Goethe, we do not concentrate our vision on Pitt's bottles of port or Goethe's bottles of Moselle. Then, why, we

ask, is there such a chasm between the Mermaid and the Globe, and why are the vintages of Wimbledon and Weimar so much more innocent than the simple punch-bowl of Inveraray marble and its contents?

I should like to go a step further and affirm that we have something to be grateful for even in the weaknesses of men like Burns. Mankind is helped in its progress almost as much by the study of imperfection as by the contemplation of perfection. Had we nothing before us in our futile and halting lives but saints and the ideal we might well fail altogether. We grope blindly along the catacombs of the world, we climb the dark ladder of life, we feel our way to futurity, but we can scarcely see an inch around or before us. We stumble and falter and fall, our hands and knees are bruised and sore, and we look up for light and guidance. Could we see nothing but distant unapproachable impeccability, we might well sink prostrate in the hopelessness of emulation and the weariness of despair. Is it not then, when all seems blank and lightless and lifeless, when strength and courage flag, and when perfection seems as remote as a star, is it not then that perfection helps us? When we see that the greatest and choicest images of God have had their weaknesses like ours, their temptations, their hours of darkness, their bloody sweat, are we not encouraged by their lapses and catastrophes to find energy for one more effort, one more struggle? Where they failed we feel it a less dishonour to fail; their errors and sorrows make, as it were, an easier ascent from infinite imperfection to infinite perfection. Man after all is not ripened by virtue alone. Were it so, this world were a paradise of angels. No! Like the growth of the earth, he is the fruit of all the seasons; the accident of a thousand accidents, a living mystery, moving through the seen to the unseen. He is sown in dishonour; he is matured under all the varieties of heat and cold; in mist and wrath, in snow and vapours, in the melancholy of autumn, in the torpor of winter, as well as in the rapture and fragrance of summer, or the balmy affluence of the spring—its breath, its sunshine, its dew. And at the end he is reaped—the product, not of

one climate, but of. all ; not of good alone,  
but of evil ; not of joy alone, but of sorrow  
—perhaps mellowed and ripened, perhaps  
stricken and withered and sour. How, then,  
shall we judge any one? How, at any rate,  
shall we judge a giant, great in gifts and  
great in temptation ; great in strength and

great in weakness? Let us glory in his  
strength and be comforted in his weakness.  
And when we thank heaven for the inestima-  
ble gift of Burns, we do not need to remem-  
ber wherein he was imperfect, we cannot  
bring ourselves to regret that he was made of  
the same clay as ourselves.

"Barnsiana"

Scot. Novels. "I can't believe how my  
Kilnmead ed. for less than  
three hundred pounds - But see  
the lat-ge has this ed- for  
that has been lying next to the  
for the past - twa months for  
twa pun ten!"

THE END.

D.C.M.















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